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Ice brings Channel Tunnel to halt

Cold weather shows no sign of relenting

By Len Jenkins

BRITAIN slithered into the new year today in the grip of a freeze which has left many roads impassable, derailed several trains and devastated sporting fixtures. Forecasters expect the cold snap to continue into the weekend.

Temperatures are not expected to rise above a maximum of 0C (32F) today. Most areas will be considerably colder with the wind-chill factor adding to the bleak outlook.

A London Weather Centre spokesman said: "We are likely to see a very cold day with some snow, a few flakes for a lot of people rather than huge falls."

As revellers saw in the new year last night, temperatures were expected to fall to -10C (14F) in the Scottish highlands and parts of Nottinghamshire, and -8C (18F) in parts of the county where snow was already lying.

Worst hit were Kent, East Anglia, Essex, and the east coast from the Wash to Scotland, where between one and four inches of snow fell. The



My resolution is to have the heating on higher this year

weather centre said yesterday the lowest overnight temperature had been -7C (19F) in Church Lawford, Warwickshire.

The winter conditions have been blamed as the most likely cause of the electrical failure which left a Eurostar train and its 469 passengers stranded for more than two hours 11 miles inside the Channel Tunnel en route to France on Monday night. Engineers believe ice on the train melted in the heated tunnel, causing an electrical fault. The train broke down where one tunnel is shut because of the damage caused by fire two months ago.

The Prince of Wales and Prince Harry were diverted from RAF Marham to Stansted for their flight to Klosters and their annual skiing holiday.

In the Channel Islands, which experienced its first heavy fall of snow in nine years, 100 passengers were stranded when three flights to Britain from Jersey were cancelled.

The effects on the Continent have been far more severe and news agencies put the death toll at 180. In Italy, where Venice lagoon has frozen over, three people have died. A circus lappo died in Udine of bronchial pneumonia.

In Germany, where temperatures dropped to -15C (5F) and four people have died in the past week, 16 illegal immigrants, mainly from Bangladesh, gave themselves up in the eastern town of Wildau.

In Britain, the death of Charles Howard, 57, a farmworker who collapsed and died while digging his car out of the snow at Baddingham, Suffolk, was attributed to the weather.

Two climbers were blown off a ridge in Snowdonia. One suffered head injuries when he fell 60 feet and his companion sustained severe bruising. They were airlifted to hospital.



Children with sleds climb to the top of the slope at a park in Scarborough

In North Yorkshire, council officials recruited more than 100 extra drivers from farms and haulage companies to assist their own staff clearing roads of snow.

The A66 from Scotch Corner to Penrith was closed, as was the eastbound M62 between Howden and North Cave. The M1 was down to one or two

lanes in the Midlands and the North. So were the M2 and M20 in parts of Kent.

Motorists organisations reported that patrol cars had dealt with about 20 per cent more calls than normal and warned motorists in the worst-hit areas not to travel unless the journey was essential.

A traditional race across the

ice on the Fens was abandoned because conditions on the washes at Welney, Cambs, were too dangerous.

An estimated quarter of a million football fans will be disappointed by postponed fixtures today.

Forecast, page 20
Winter break, page 21

Outrage over deal to make film about killer West

By Bill Frost

A LEADING production company is planning to make a film of the life of the serial killer Frederick West using material from the Cromwell Street murder inquiry.

Peter Harris, the Official Solicitor, said yesterday that he has entered into an option agreement with the Portman Entertainment Group. The deal gives the London company non-documentary film, television, video and ancillary rights to archive material from the family estate.

Mr Harris was appointed by the courts to look after the interests of the Wests' young children. He has the responsibility of maximising the financial return on the estate, which included the sale of the former family home at 25 Cromwell Street.

The project has outraged many of those touched by the mass murder. The West family is divided and the people of Gloucester are furious that the world is to be reminded of their city's darkest side.

The Rt Rev David Bentley, the Bishop of Gloucester, said: "I deplore the news. The relatives of the victims have suffered quite enough from publicity and considerable media exposure and so have the family of the Wests and, indeed, the whole city of Gloucester."

Doug West, the killer's brother, said the prospect of a film was "sick". He added: "I reckon they should leave it alone and let everybody forget about it."

"The relatives of the victims have had enough. I have had enough. I was hoping to have a good new year and put all this behind me. Now it will all come up again."

Much of the material was

derived from the lengthy inquiry which led to builder West being charged with 12 counts of murder. He hanged himself on New Year's Day 1995 while awaiting trial. His wife, Rosemary, was later convicted on ten murder counts and is now serving life imprisonment.

No details were given about the financial aspects of the deal. But the option contract is believed to be in four figures. A large cash boost can be expected for the estate if a film is finally in production.

Terry Haines, the Mayor of Gloucester, also criticised the project. "It is a case of people seeing an opportunity to make money. I don't think a film about Fred West can be justified on any moral grounds."

Douglas French, the Tory MP for Gloucester, said: "This is another sordid example of commercial exploitation of tragic events which the residents of Gloucester would prefer to forget. The showing of any film will be deeply painful for relatives of victims."

"I intend to urge the Lord Chancellor to revise the duties of the Official Solicitor to ensure that any future commercial exploitation is not allowed to take priority over common human decency."

The Portman Entertainment Group has a successful track record — their forthcoming production of Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca* for Carlton Television has been described by critics who have seen the preview as a triumph. Other ventures have included *An Awfully Big Adventure*, starring Hugh Grant, and first British distribution rights for the Australian soap *Home and Away*.

Michael Gove, page 14

Deng 'very ill' in Peking hospital

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN HONG KONG

A HONG KONG newspaper with close ties to the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) reported yesterday that China's senior leader, Deng Xiaoping, was seriously ill and receiving emergency treatment in Peking.

Sing Tao, which publishes a weekly supplement from *Liberation Daily*, the PLA newspaper in China, said that Deng, 92, was in military hospital 301 in the west of the capital. There was no official confirmation of the report, though Peking's vice mayor Zhang Baifu, who knows Deng, said last week that the ageing senior leader was in good health.

Deng, who was last seen in

public in February 1994, when he looked frail and ailing, has said that he would like to visit Hong Kong to witness Britain handing back the territory to China in June this year. That looks increasingly unlikely.

Deng's health has long been a matter of speculation, and there have been a series of alarms in the past that were reflected in the stock markets of Hong Kong and Shanghai — this time, though, the news had little impact on share prices.

The latest reports came as state-run China Central Television prepares to broadcast a 12-part series on the life of Deng, who was purged by Mao three times, but each time returned from the wilderness. Newspapers in Hong Kong say it is unusual for such a tribute to be paid during the lifetime of a political leader.

To mark the event, newspapers published prominent photographs of Deng, whose stock has fallen lately with the emergence of President Jiang Zemin as the party's chosen successor.

There is no doubt that Deng is ill, and, as newspapers reported here last October, he may well have lost his ability to hear and even to walk and to converse. His death would not be concealed — it would filter out quickly, for the State and party apparatus is very porous.

Peking fears, page 9

Stamp thief eluded security search at Wilson's No 10

By Adrian Lee

HAROLD WILSON, always hounded by fears of dark conspiracies against him, was betrayed by one of his staff who "looked common, possibly from the gardener class".

Government documents from 1966, released today, disclose that the Prime Minister's staff spent the spring of 1966 trying to unravel who, among the Downing St staff, might be selling collectable Rhodesian stamps from Mr Wilson's correspondence.

Envelopes bearing the stamps had acquired a rarity value as they had been declared illegal by the Paymaster General following Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence. The letters, addressed to Wilson, were turning up at the stamp dealer Stanley Gibbons and Wilson wanted to know how. It was not so much a case of

stamping out Downing St leaks as of leaking out Downing St stamps.

The whodunnit began when a man, claiming to be from the Wilson household, walked into the Stanley Gibbons office in the Strand and sold eight envelopes bearing Rhodesian stamps — face value 2s 6d (12½p) each — for £2. Wilson's security chief, Group Captain MED Williams, was detailed to sniff out the culprit.

The description, provided by the buyers, was a startling one. Clean-shaven and of medium build, the suspect wore a hat but not glasses. He was 5ft 6in tall, aged about 45, and "looked common, possibly from the gardener class".

That "could apply to many members of the staff of Number 10," Group Captain Williams sniffed in his nine-page report. In all, 82 staff — from

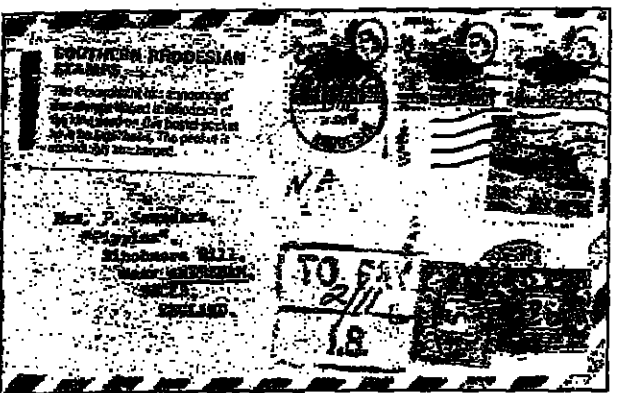
cleaner to Private Secretary — were interrogated, in the spring of 1966. The ministerial and Church appointments section came under scrutiny and the head of the post department offered to sign an affidavit saying she was not the thief.

Explaining his decision to question high-ranking officials, Group Captain Williams said: "Equity requires that the finger of suspicion should at least be pointed in that direction as well as at the civil servants who work here."

The rogue philatelist was never found. As months passed it became clear that staff at numbers 11 and 12 also had access to Wilson's mail. So did police officers. Group Captain Williams, and the report's co-author, S.C. Firman, head of security at the Treasury, realised that the net was becoming too wide. In May 1966, the search was abandoned.

After the affair, Downing Street actually considered destroying all foreign stamps to avoid a repeat. There was even a suggestion that No 10 should follow the thief's lead and sell stamps to raise revenue. The idea brought the snappy response from the prime minister's office: "We are not philatelists. We are a government department dealing with correspondence."

1966 papers, page 5



One of the banned envelopes that had gained a rarity value

Markets end the year on a high

Shares and the pound ended the year in London at a record high.

The FT-SE 100 index of leading shares rose 2.8 points to close at 4,118.5, a new closing high and a rise of 11.7 per cent on the year.

The pound's Bank of England trade-weighted index rose 0.5 to close at 96.1, a rise on the year of 15.6 per cent. Page 40

Stock market, page 34

Frinton wows the Germans again

The music hall artist Freddie Frinton, who found brief fame as Thora Hird's husband in the 1960s television series *Meet The Wife*, is now a cult hero to generations of Germans.

For millions of German television viewers New Year's Eve is not complete without watching Frinton in *Dinner For One*, an obscure comedy routine filmed more than three decades ago. Page 3

Israel haggles over Hebron deal

Israel was still haggling with the Palestine Liberation Organisation over prisoner releases and target dates for future West Bank handovers, after agreeing on terms for its withdrawal from most of Hebron.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, has postponed his proposed summit with Yassir Arafat. Page 6

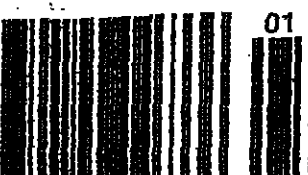
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GURZON MAYFAIR CHELSEA CINEMA ODEON



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Forgotten Fred keeps German new year alive

By Russell Jenkins

THE long forgotten music hall artist Fred Frinton, who found brief fame as Thora Hird's husband in the 1960s television series *Meet The Wife*, is now a cult hero to generations of Germans. Millions of German television viewers do not believe their New Year's Eve celebrations are complete without switching on to see Frinton perform in *Dinner For One*, an obscure comedy routine filmed more than three decades ago in black and white. The sketch, filmed in Hamburg by the NDR-broadcasting station in 1963, shows Frinton and his stage sidekick May Warden play out one of their variety set pieces, familiar to music hall audiences, as the long-suffering butler to a deluded 90-year-old dowager. It has become so ingrained in German popular culture that it has been shown on television every New Year's Eve for the past 33 years. German sociologists earnestly debate its significance. It enjoys its own entry in the *Guinness Book of Records* and enthusiasts like to hold *Dinner For One* parties — they watch the video, eat mulligatawny soup, North Sea shellfish and roast chicken like the characters. Gertrud Erbach, a German librarian who lives in London, said: "People like to watch it two or three times on New Year's Eve because the local stations show it at different times. It is a cult much like the *Rocky Horror Picture Show*. People know exactly what is going to happen, they know the words and can anticipate the jokes. It is something that everybody knows."



Frinton made his name playing stage drunks

who made his name as a stage drunk, became increasingly inebriated. Every time he walks around the table he trips up on a tiger rug in a parody of the music hall artist's prat fall. At every stage, Frinton asks plaintively whether he has to go through the same procedure every year. In a reply that raises instant recognition throughout Germany, Miss Sophie insists: "The same procedure as every year."

Sophie's bedtime, she holds out her arms to her butler in an invitation to be whisked off to the dowager's bedroom. She insists that the butler performs the "same procedure as every year" whereupon James replies wearily: "I'll do my very best."

For much of his career Frinton scratched a living on the variety circuit. His most well known character was as a drunk. His catchphrase "good evening ossifer" was heard from Blackpool to summer season at Bournemouth. Frinton, son of a Grimsby fisherman, went on to achieve fame in *Meet The Wife*. Frinton's lugubrious features perfectly matched the hen-pecked character but the series came to an end in 1968 when he died from a heart attack. Some years earlier he had been spotted by German television executives from Hamburg when he was performing for seaside audiences in Blackpool. In 1963 Frinton travelled to Germany to appear on a television chat show along with the familiar tiger rug from *Dinner For One*. However, he always refused to film the show in German because, it is rumoured, he didn't like Germans. One television executive told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme: "The more often you watch it, the funnier it gets. It is typically British black humour."

However, two years ago a Munich-based newspaper suggested that Frinton had done more for Anglo-German relations than the footballer Jürgen Klinsmann.



Sammy the seal, during its unusual river visit to Teddington yesterday morning

TWO rowers spotted a seal jolting on a bank of the Thames just upstream of Teddington yesterday morning (Nick Nuttall writes). Crispin Jessop, one of the oarsmen, and a keen amateur photographer, said: "We were paddling into Trowlock Island, about half a mile upstream of Teddington Lock, after rowing to Hampton Court and back. The wind chill factor made it about -12C. Suddenly, here was this seal. We have seen great crested grebes and quite a few herons. But I have never seen a seal upstream," Mr Jessop, 49, a salesman, said. The seal, which has been named Sam-

Seal makes trip up the Thames

my, must have travelled 50 miles up the Thames. Mr Jessop's friend Gerry Spring urged him to dash back to his home in Twickenham to fetch a camera. He had the fleeting chance of capturing the seal for posterity before she turned over on her side, and plopped back into the river. "We wondered whether we should contact the RSPCA," said Mr Jessop. He

believes the animal must have negotiated a salmon ladder to have got beyond Teddington Lock. The Environment Agency's Thames region office said: "We received a call from a pub saying they had seen a seal. I suppose we wondered if they had started the new year festivities early. But we do get reports of about one seal a year." The agency said it did not intervene in such cases. "The river is basically tidal at this point and there is a good supply of fish. The seal will probably make its way back down the river under its own steam."

Police seek children in £180 taxi ride home

By a Staff Reporter

POLICE are trying to trace two children who apparently set off together on a mysterious 400-mile round trip by train and taxi with at least £180 in cash. Officers in Liverpool were alerted on Monday night after a ten-year-old girl and six-year-old boy arrived at the city's Lime Street Station on a train from London. A ticket collector noticed that their tickets were valid only to Luton, Bedfordshire, but when he challenged them, they ran off into the city. After media appeals yesterday, the wife of a Liverpool taxi driver contacted police to confirm that her husband had driven the children back to Luton on Monday night. The girl was able to pay the driver the fare, believed to be about £180, in cash. The children were of Mediterranean appearance and spoke with foreign accents. Detective Chief Inspector Phil Barr said: "The children got into a taxi in Lime Street and asked to be taken to London. The driver said he could not do that but took them to the taxi office. The girl rang her mother from a phone box there and put her on to the taxi driver. The mother confirmed that he should drive them home and that her daughter had enough money to pay the fare. "When they got there the children asked to be dropped in Luton rather than at a specific address, and the girl paid the taxi driver. We are satisfied that it is the same two children and that they are now in Luton. "But we are unable to trace who they are, and we have spoken to our colleagues in Bedfordshire Constabulary to try to ascertain who they are and that they have returned to their mother. "It is a bizarre story, but they are all the facts we have. We still don't know why they travelled all the way to Liverpool or why they had all that money with them in the first place. A Liverpool police spokeswoman said: "It might just be that they were meant to get off at Luton but missed their stop and for some reason had enough money for the taxi."

What's in a name for newborn Cassius?

By Joanna Bale

BY naming their newborn son Cassius, after christening his elder brother Columbus, Lady Helen Taylor and her art dealer husband Tim have re-established a tradition of exotic royal names. Cassius, who is twenty-sixth in line to the throne, may have been named after the Roman who led the conspiracy against Julius Caesar. Another, less notorious Cassius, is the boxer Muhammad Ali, who changed his name from Cassius Clay. Mandy Allwood, the woman who lost eight babies after becoming pregnant on fertility drugs last year, also named one of them Cassius. The origin of the name is unclear but it could come from the Latin *cassus*, meaning "hollow" or "empty". Whatever their reason for choosing the name, the Taylors were keeping it quiet yesterday. A Buckingham Palace spokeswoman said she had "no idea" what had inspired them. Cassius's brother Columbus, from the Latin *columba* meaning pigeon or dove, appears to have been named after a 6th-century Scottish saint, St Columba, or the 15th-century Italian explorer, Christopher Columbus, although there were rumours that it was the former name of the Taylors' favourite Knightsbridge restaurant in their court days. Other unusual royal names include Princess Anne's daughter Zara, Princess Alexandra's daughter Marina Mowatt chose Zenouska for her daughter. The Duke and Duchess of York's daughters Beatrice and Eugenie were named after Queen Victoria's youngest child and her daughter. In the 13th century, Edward I named a daughter Berengaria, while in more recent times George III named four of his 15 children Augusta or Augustus — two as their middle names. He also had a son called Adolphus and another Octavius. Royal watcher, Margaret Holder, said: "With a common surname like Taylor, you need an unusual Christian name to stand out, especially if you have royal blood."

Britons pay £5bn to keep life sweet

By Daniel McGroarty

BRITONS kept their place as the world's leading consumers of chocolate and confectionery in 1996, raising their spending by 6 per cent to £4.9 billion. Among the newer temptations, chocolate ice-cream bars accounted for £77 million, and sales of kingsize bars rose 28 per cent to £49 million. The favourite seller for the tenth year in succession was the KitKat, beating off the challenge from the Mars bar, says Nestlé in its annual review of the confectionery market. In the UK, 47 KitKat bars are eaten every second. The sexes have their differences: men are more likely to favour Mars and Snickers bars, while women prefer what the experts classify as "lighter" brands such as Aero and Flake. A third of all the chocolate and confectionery is eaten by children, whose top-selling brands were Milky Way, Smarties, Milky Bar and Rowntree's Fruit Pastilles. There is only limited evidence of concern about having a sweet tooth. The purchase of sugar-free mints has more than doubled since 1993 — although they lag far behind the Polo.

Saudi lawyers say trial of nurses will be fair

By a Staff Reporter

LAWYERS acting for the two British nurses accused of murdering an Australian colleague in Saudi Arabia yesterday insisted that they would help them to receive a fair trial. They issued an explanation of the country's legal system after widespread reports in the western media that defence lawyers have no right to conduct cross-examinations or arrange for translators. The firm Salah Al-Hajjailan, based in the capital Riyadh, said the case could display the merits of Saudi's legal system to the outside world. The statement included details on how victims' families can waive their right to ask for the death penalty in return for the payment of "blood money". Deborah Parry, 41, from the Midlands, and Lucille Lauchlan, 31, from Dundee are jointly charged with murdering Yvonne Gilford, 55, a senior theatre nurse at the King Fahd Military Medical College in Dhahran. They were arrested on December 20, nine days after Miss Gilford was found stabbed and beaten to death, and are being held in prison. If found guilty the two could be publicly executed. However Ghazi Alghosabi, the Saudi



Parry: family insists on her innocence

ambassador, said the death sentence was not automatic. The legal firm was appointed after a visit by the British consul Timothy Lamb to the two women. Earlier this week, Miss Parry's family expressed shock and surprise at her arrest. They described her as a dedicated nurse who could not have committed the crime. Her family say that she suffered a succession of blows. Her mother Eunice was killed in a boating accident while on holiday in Norfolk. Her father John died several years later and then her teenage brother was killed in a motorcycle crash. Sandra Ashbee, 40, Miss Parry's eldest sister, who lives in Alton, Hampshire, said: "It just doesn't add up. There is no way she has done this. I will stake my life on it. Life is so precious to her because of what happened to her in the past." The lawyers stressed that Islamic law would ensure a fair trial for the couple. The law firm said that the killing had "touched upon the feelings of the Saudi community as the offence has been allegedly committed by foreigners who are members of the nursing profession which is generally believed to be a profession of mercy". It said suspects had "the right to have a fair trial. This involves magisterial inquiry to be conducted by a judge, the right of the accused to seek legal assistance and to be assisted by a translator." The firm said a defence lawyer would speak on behalf of the nurses in court and could conduct a form of cross-examination. There would be no prosecution lawyer, only a police report with the judge handling the rest of prosecution case. Under Islamic law, the victim's family could ask for blood money in place of the death penalty.

Wheelchair ban at 'friendly' station

By Paul Wilkinson

TRAVELLERS in wheelchairs have been told that they cannot use trains at a new station hailed as disabled-friendly when it opened four months ago. Yarm Station in Stockton-on-Tees cost £600,000 to build and incorporates the latest facilities for the disabled, including tactile surfaces and ramps. But the station at the market town is unmanned, and Regional Railways says that for insurance purposes a member of staff must be present if disabled people board or alight from trains. The problem came to light when Eric Parker, a wheelchair-bound pensioner, wanted to travel from his home in Sheffield to visit his son Ted, who lives only 30 yards from the station. His son said: "We were delighted when the new station opened as it meant Mum and Dad could visit. Dad has an electric

wheelchair and the light transport system in Sheffield means he can get from his home to Sheffield station easily, then catch a train to York and on to Yarm." But when Mr Parker, 67, tried to book a ticket, he was told he could not get off at a ticket. Because of his wheelchair, Mr Parker was told he would have to get off at the nearest manned stations at Darlington or Middlesbrough — both more than a dozen miles away — and be collected. Even the assistance of Mr Parker's able-bodied son was not enough to lift the restriction. His son said: "We can see Yarm station from the house, but in the end Dad had to travel to Darlington where Age Concern kindly picked him up in an adapted minibus and brought him here. That is a 24-mile round trip, which is bad enough, but there are unmanned stations at more far-flung places which would mean even more discomfort for disabled passengers."

Half the stations in Britain must be unmanned, and the disabled are effectively banned from using them. A spokesman for Regional Railways said: "We do provide a good service for disabled passengers but this relies, for insurance purposes, on staff being available to provide assistance getting on and off the train. When Yarm station was built, we carefully considered facilities for the disabled and these were provided with a view to the future. We are carrying out trials on portable ramps which can be carried on trains and operated by the conductor to allow disabled access. The cost of manufacturing and fitting such ramps is expensive, and as a private company we require funding to fit them. "We have approached local councils in the hope of them paying for this facility but, unfortunately, at the moment wheelchair-bound passengers cannot use unmanned stations."

"Not sure which rewards programme is the best"



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Cards

Prince unveils plan to save abandoned giants from ruin

BY MARCUS BINNEY

THE Prince of Wales discloses a plan today to breathe life into some of the nation's largest and most neglected listed buildings by turning them into low-cost housing for local people.

His newly formed Phoenix Trust will acquire sites such as country houses, textile mills, hospitals and military enclaves, then convert them for sale as places to live and work.

The idea has been prompted by the large numbers of historic properties vacated by the Ministry of Defence and the NHS. Kit Martin, the architect and developer who has been a prime mover in the formation of the trust, said yesterday: "Within a few years of being vacated, many of these buildings have become derelict. Some have already been demolished. We cannot continue to allow acres of useable historic buildings to be lost."

The Prince is president of the trust and will be involved in choosing buildings for conversion. The trust will start work this year, tackling four sites at a time, with each project taking about four years for acquisition, repair, conversion and sale. A typical project would cost up to £5 million, although some could be up to £10 million. In each case, most of the cost will be recouped

from sales, mostly to local people at competitive prices, to help to fund the next projects.

Some owners have already made it clear that they are keen to sell, either freehold or on a long lease. A substantial sum of seed money, believed to be well into six figures, has been provided by the oil company Arco. The trust is also likely to seek grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and its counterparts in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Mr Martin said: "The Phoenix will be able to tackle only a small proportion of the many fine buildings now at risk, but the Prince's example will encourage others, showing these buildings are not useless white elephants but potentially some of the most interesting places to live and work."

The chairman of the trust is David Taylor, who has been chief executive of the Government's regeneration agency, English Partnerships.

The Prince is known to be concerned about such buildings as the Royal William Victualling Yard at Plymouth. It is the size of a small Georgian town and remains largely empty after being handed to Plymouth Development Corporation in 1993.

The Ministry of Defence has been reluctant to provide sta-

istics of its disposals after an outcry at advertisements for Greenwich Royal Naval College.

However, Lord Cranborne, a Defence under-secretary, said in 1994 that the MoD had "more than 700 listed buildings, twice as many as the National Trust". Candidates for disposal include the Royal Clarence Victualling at Gosport, the former guards barracks at Caterham, dating from the 1870s, and the Regency Horseshoe barracks at Shoeburyness, Essex.

The NHS is closing numerous specialist hospitals in listed buildings, including the Regency Royal Seabathing Hospital at Margate, Kent. Ninety-eight of 121 former NHS mental hospitals in England are to go by 2000, according to a report published last year. Those empty or soon to be vacated include the Royal Earwood Hospital near Redhill, Surrey, the Regency Asylum in Gloucester, the Georgian Asylum at Stafford, and Garlands, Carlisle.

Mental hospitals were often built as showpieces of philanthropy by county councils and boroughs, and were built on south-facing slopes in landscaped grounds.

Other candidates for the new trust will be a series of hospitals sold to developers during the 1980s boom, which still remain empty. Among these is the Regency Hospital at Exvale, outside Exeter, where English Heritage is carrying out repairs.

In Scotland, more than 100 substantial country mansions lie empty and decaying, many unroofed after the war to avoid paying rates.

In Wales, a major candidate for the trust is Pembroke Dock, where numerous Regency buildings designed by Edward Holl, architect to the Admiralty, are vacant and in a state of decay.



The Royal Clarence Victualling buildings in Gosport



Annie Nightingale at Heathrow yesterday. She broke her leg when she was mugged in Cuba on Christmas Eve

Mugged DJ flies home for treatment

THE Radio 1 disc jockey Annie Nightingale returned to Britain yesterday after being mugged in Cuba on Christmas Eve. She was taken straight from Heathrow to hospital for a check-up after the attack in Havana.

The 54-year-old was accompanied by a British nurse on the flight from Cuba, via Madrid. She looked tired and drawn as she was carried off on a stretcher and taken by ambulance to St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, west London.

Miss Nightingale broke her leg when a mugger snatched her bag. A companion who chased the attacker suffered a broken collarbone. Surgeons operated on her the same night and a pin and

screws were placed in her leg just below the hip. She will probably not be able to walk for two months.

A spokesman for the BBC said that Miss Nightingale, who became Radio 1's first female disc jockey in 1970, was pleased to be home. Miss Nightingale, who had been in Havana to research a music programme, said the affair had been very stressful. "I am just relieved and delighted to be home. I broke down in tears on the way to the hospital because of the whole situation. It was just very difficult being treated by people you don't understand."

The language barrier was a major problem although I think the doctors did

a great job," she added. Miss Nightingale was being seen by a consultant at St Mary's yesterday and was undergoing a series of X-rays. She is expected to remain in hospital for at least a week.

Police arrested two youths in connection with the attack, in which Miss Nightingale's bag, containing her contacts book, passport, money and return ticket, was stolen.

A 17-year-old and 20-year-old, apprehended at a house in central Havana near the scene of the mugging, have been charged with robbery with violence and causing actual bodily harm. Both offences carry maximum sentences of eight years.

Pensioner lay dead in home for two weeks

Ex-servicemen living in sheltered housing are furious after a war veteran lay dead in his bed for two weeks. His body was not discovered until after Christmas, when the warden was on holiday in Spain. Police say Les Flemons, 73, a former Royal Navy electrician, probably died on December 14. But his body was not found until December 29, when his son called police because he could not get a reply at his father's home in Thetford, Norfolk.

Residents said they had seen no one patrolling the complex of 36 bedsits and one-bedroomed flats since the warden and her husband left for a two-week holiday on Christmas Eve. Housing 21, which runs the complex, said that Mr Flemons had indicated that he did not need regular visits.

Commando deal

Senior officers are writing to ex-commandos who have left the Royal Marines in the past few years, offering them the chance to rejoin without again undergoing the notorious 30-week training course. The 7,500-strong Royal Marines are under strength by about 700 men.

Fingers severed

Two men with meat cleavers and baseball bats attacked a 21-year-old man in Levenshulme, Manchester, hacking off two fingers and leaving him with cuts to his head, forearms and body. Police were later waiting to interview the victim, Christopher Hart Samuel, in hospital.

Church attacker

A man who punched a worshipper and a female steward during early Mass at Westminster Cathedral, London, was ordered by a subsidiary magistrate to be detained at a mental hospital. Noel O'Connor, 29, kept on to the altar, smashing a 6ft crucifix and causing £10,000 damage.

Meningitis death

An 18-year-old Birmingham woman has become the latest fatality from meningitis. Dawn Arries died early on Christmas Day, 36 hours after complaining of a stiff neck. A four-year-old Stoke boy and a 14-year-old Newcastle girl died from the infection before the holiday.

Watch for owls

A campaign is being launched to save the barn owl. Numbers in Britain have declined by 70 per cent since the 1930s to about 5,000 breeding pairs. The public is being asked to report sightings to the British Trust for Ornithology for a national register to provide information on behaviour.

Record pilchard

A 14oz 6 dram pilchard caught by Wesley Donoghue, 15, at Brixham, Devon, has been certified by the British Record Fish Committee as the heaviest on record, 6oz more than the previous best. Wesley, who used squid as bait, plans to have it stuffed and hung on his bedroom wall.

Peter the Great arrived in Britain in 1697, not 400 years ago as stated in a leading article on Monday.

How to improve your health odds in life's unequal lottery

ERNIE BAILEY died of a suspected heart attack less than two years after winning the lottery jackpot. The wealth may have brought happiness but it has also said to have led to a life of sloth and gluttony.

Mr Bailey, 63, a former Birmingham factory worker, already had evidence of heart disease before he won the jackpot in April 1995. By the time he died, his weight had reached more than 22 stone, reportedly the result of his fondness for lager, takeaway meals, and lying on the sofa watching videos. He is said to

have disregarded medical advice to lose weight and take exercise, and to have failed in his attempts to give up smoking.

Mr Bailey's comparatively early end may in part have been determined by his weight at birth. The poorer the parents' background, the likelier that a baby will be of low birth weight, and the greater the chance that when he or she reaches middle age, cardiovascular disease will occur.

Diet in childhood and early life is also related to social background. It takes time, as well as money — both of which



may be in short supply in working-class homes — to prepare the type of food recommended by dieticians as likely to keep the weight down and blood cholesterol low. Furthermore, when Mr Bailey was born, childhood infections were much more common in poor households than today.

It is over-simplistic to claim, as is commonly done, that class differences in life expectancy can just be attributed to workers over-indulging in beer, cigarettes and fried food, not eating enough vegetables, and taking insufficient exercise. But with lung cancer and heart disease the most impor-

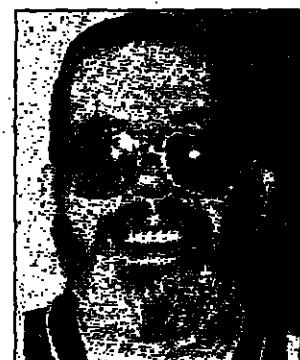
tant killers in late middle age, faulty diet and lack of exercise must contribute to the difference in mortality.

Mr Bailey's obesity, with his consumption of convenience food and large quantities of beer would have made it likely that one day an atherosclerotic fatty plaque would rupture in a coronary artery and block it so that his heart muscle would suffer fatal injury.

We are born unequal, yet the odds in life's race can be altered. Mr Bailey's chances of reaching old age would have been improved by not smok-

ing, half an hour's daily brisk walk, and a slimming diet — in particular, keeping the fat consumed down to 30 per cent of energy intake, and a high intake of anti-oxidants — vitamins C and E, beta-carotene and folic acid. His regular visits to the pub would not have damaged those chances if he had no more than a couple of pints of beer, but a few glasses of red wine would have been a better tipple.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFFORD



Bailey: believed to have died of heart attack

Flesh-eating bug victim wins £62,000 damages

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A BOY who had to have lifesaving surgery after becoming infected with the "flesh-eating bug" has won £62,000 damages from a medical practice and the doctor who wrongly diagnosed his condition.

Peter Duffy was told that he was suffering from gastroenteritis and paracetamol was prescribed for a muscle injury. But within days of a home visit by a family doctor, the teenager was undergoing surgery to cut out tissue from his right arm and chest after he developed necrotising fasciitis. At the Court of Session in

Edinburgh Mr Duffy sued Adrian Mairs, the GP who first saw him, and a family doctors' practice.

He claimed that if he had been referred to hospital more quickly, a virulent infection he was suffering from would have been identified earlier and treated. This would have avoided him developing the bug and the need for surgery, which has left him with extensive scarring.

Lord Hamilton said in a written judgment issued yesterday that referral 40 hours earlier would have prompted treatment before a condition developed that had "permanent adverse effects".

The judge was told that Mr Duffy was a 15-year-old pupil at St Augustine's High School in Edinburgh when he fell ill in November 1991. A few days beforehand he had taken part in a boxing session, where he suffered cuts to his wrist and knuckle.

After he felt unwell, suffering vomiting, diarrhoea and a swollen arm, his mother phoned the Whinpark Medical Centre in Edinburgh. Dr Mairs, who was then an additional GP at the practice, went to his home.

Dr Mairs made a primary diagnosis that the boy was suffering gastroenteritis which required no medical treatment. The doctor diagnosed his painful

swollen upper arm as a muscular injury. His symptoms worsened and two days later his mother again called the practice. Another doctor called on him and immediately had him admitted to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

An acute streptococcal infection was diagnosed and antibiotics were administered intravenously. But a consulting surgeon realised that necrotising fasciitis had developed. If an operation had not been carried out the boy would have died, the court was told. He later had to have skin grafts.

The court was told that after leaving school the teenager was certified as unfit for work.

Charity discloses cruel realities of turtle trade

BY DANIEL MCGRORY

THE chainsaw prised away the shell with cruel ease while the giant turtle thrashed around on the beach with what strength it still had, trying to escape the poachers' grasp.

Some of those wishing to buy the exquisitely marked turtle shell, or the meat, boast that they are willing to pay more if they know it is hewn off while the creature is still alive. The life of this reptile, which was more than 60 years old, was extinguished in a few minutes so that some unthinking tourists could go home from a South Sea island holiday with an ornate musical instrument shaped from its shell, or try some exotic restaurant dish.

Sea turtles have been on Earth for 150 million years, before the age of the dinosaurs. Today their numbers are dangerously depleted, and only seven species remain.

They are increasingly being caught, sometimes accidentally, in fishing nets, mainly by those trawling for shrimps. Even if the turtle survives the



The green turtle: nesting sites have sharply declined

capture, the fishermen do not bother to extricate it but cut off its ensnared flippers and throw the turtle back into the water as shark bait.

Conservationists say that the green turtle — which is used in turtle soup — has lost 700,000 nesting sites in Australia in the past 25 years, and that Mexico's olive ridley turtles have lost 350,000 sites in the same period.

The leatherback turtle, which migrates up and down the west coast of Britain every year, is becoming a rarer sight. Along with four other species, it is now officially classed as endangered. Less than 1 per cent of

hatching turtles survive to adulthood, and some turtles do not reach breeding age until they are older than 30.

At sea they are fast and graceful creatures using their paddles in the same way a bird uses its wings.

Below the water, a turtle holds its breath for hours at a time, and can slow its heartbeat to only one beat every nine minutes to conserve oxygen, as it migrates thousands of miles in a year, moving between nesting and feeding grounds.

But their ancient nesting sites are being torn up because of the greed for beachside developments,

their eggs are being stolen as souvenirs or restaurant delicacies, and there is a growing trade in turtle body parts.

Turtle skin is used for boots and handbags; the reptile's oil is used for caulking boats and for traditional medicines; and the beautiful translucent shell is used for spectacle frames, jewellery and musical instruments.

In an effort to educate the public about the appalling realities of turtle culling, Tusk Force is to show on television in the Far East a video depicting a turtle being dismembered alive.

Conservationists concede that it is harder to protect wildlife at sea than on land. Despite the ten-year moratorium on the commercial killing of whales, some half a million dolphins and porpoises are slaughtered each year. The International Whaling Commission insists that it is powerless to stop the deaths, be it for sport, food, or fish bait, or the result of tens of thousands being caught accidentally in nets.

The fear now is that international commitment to the

Tusk Force Appeal

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ban on whaling is waning and that the commission will decide that as some populations have recovered, then commercial whaling of some stocks should be permitted.

Neels Bettridge, the director of Tusk Force, said: "Once you give any kind of green light, the whale hunters will be back in business with a vengeance."

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From swinging city to Euro-sceptics, '96 was an action replay

By Joe Joseph

CONTRARY to the old joke, 1996 proved that nostalgia is what it used to be.

For many people who were around in 1966, living through the past year was rather like being Bill Murray in the film *Groundhog Day*, waking every morning to spookily familiar experiences, newspaper headlines, sensations and even sadnesses.

For the first time in 30 years you could have walked out of your

front door in a pink mini-skirt covered your eyelids in black eye shadow and stepped into the seat of a newly designed Jaguar sports car that was the envy of the world, and nobody would have given you a second glance. Even if you were a man.

The government documents released today after 30 years in the vaults only confirm this sense of déjà vu. The aroma of 1966 has hung in the air all year.

The Beatles then were making the headlines at home and putting

Britain in the news abroad, in the sort of way that Oasis and Pulp and the Britpop bands are doing today. *Newsweek's* recent hailing of London as the capital of cool is a startling echo of *Time* magazine's crowning of London in 1966 as "The Swinging City".

Fewer women may have offered to bear Bobby Charlton's babies than they did Alan Shearer's, but in other respects the Euro '96 football tournament reignited all the passions, if not quite all the England glory, of the 1966 World

Cup. And London is not only the coolest cultural and fashion capital since the days of Carnaby Street, but the word "cool" has re-entered the language, not as blushing self-conscious 1960s hippy talk, but as Establishment-fashionable.

In politics, the Labour Party has a leader who has spent the past 12 months painting a picture of a future Britain that is technologically clued-in and wired-up, evoking memories of Harold Wilson and his "white heat of technology" vision.

Tony Blair even has his own Marcia Williams. In fact, he has two: Peter Mandelson and Alastair Campbell.

In another echo, the newly released Cabinet documents show that British politicians were as vexed in 1966 about the threat to sovereignty by membership of the Common Market as they are now. The tide of Euro-scepticism appeared to be as strong then as anything that John Major has to face today.

The issues were given a formal

airing during a Cabinet committee meeting at Chequers in October 1966 before Britain's formal application to join the Common Market.

Further abroad, politicians and diplomats have spent the past year speculating anxiously about Boris Yeltsin's health in much the way they spent 1966 wondering whether or not Mao Tse-tung would live long enough to reap the glory, or the havoc, of his newly launched Cultural Revolution.

And tragically, the Aberfan

disaster of 1966 had a chilling reprise at Dunblane. It was in 1966 that *The Sound of Music* won the Oscar for Best Film, concrete tower blocks began rising across the country, and Bob Dylan shocked his purist fans by turning up at the Albert Hall with an electric back-up band.

They are all still with us. So are *The Who*, performing live on stage again.

Even sheepskin coats made a comeback. Fortunately, Sacha Distel didn't.

Bankers lost faith in Wilson's ideas as pound slumped

Reports by Valerie Elliott, Adrian Lee and Joe Joseph

HAROLD WILSON had lost the confidence of the banks within a few months of his 1966 election victory, confidential records released under the 30-year rule show.

With the economy in crisis, the Prime Minister hosted a private dinner party at 10 Downing Street for 18 prominent bankers where he faced stern questioning.

The minutes recorded on August 3 state: "The explanation [for the crisis] was to be found in a general malaise throughout the country stemming from the loss of empire and the lack of any idea to replace it." The bankers added: "There was a lack of confidence both at home and abroad in the Government and hence in sterling."

The bankers, among them the Governor of the Bank of England, believed the Labour Government was against them and the cure was "in a rebuilding of national confidence." They were critical of government policy, and singled out overspending, on social services.

Mr Wilson had clashed with the governor, Lord Cromer, in the run-up to the election in March. Lord Cromer had threatened to resign after the Prime Minister opposed a 1 per cent rise in interest rates.

Mr Wilson's attempts that year to shore up sterling led him to seek help from the Americans. A letter to President Johnson gave a warning that he [Wilson] might have to take tougher measures to stabilise the currency.

Some of his Cabinet col-

leagues, including George Brown, the Minister for Economic Affairs, were urging him to devalue. But Mr Wilson instead pushed through a package of deflationary measures. Minutes of a special Cabinet meeting in July noted "the prevailing lack of confidence in the British economy was due to a persisting doubt about our ability to pay our way."

Mr Wilson attempted to defuse the air of panic among some of his ministers and said: "It is important to distinguish between problems of reality and problems of confidence."

He also made clear that despite his concern over rising unemployment, "if it is a choice between full employment and devaluation, I will devalue." The Cabinet stalled a decision for a year, and George Brown made clear that he reserved his position.

Among the measures introduced by Mr Wilson were hire purchase restrictions and a £50 limit for travellers taking sterling abroad.

Mr Wilson blamed the summer's strike, low productivity and a truculent labour force for the nation's ills. He revealed in one meeting that he had considered, and rejected, raising the price of school meals and introducing prescription charges. The Prime

Minister thought his prices and income freeze would have a "good moral effect."

But the economic picture continued to be bleak. In the summer, Lord Cromer warned the Prime Minister that sterling was in a critical situation after losing £78 million in value in two days.

In October, the Prime Minister confessed in a minute to his Chancellor that the imminent prospect of 500,000 people unemployed — despite his earlier assurances that half a million would be the upper limit — was "pretty horrifying" and he considered covertly restoring cuts in public investment.

But while a key plank of Labour's economic strategy was holding down wages, papers reveal that ministers were reluctant to make the ultimate sacrifice. At a Cabinet meeting where it was suggested that ministers might forgo some of their salaries, the conclusion was that "a voluntary gesture of this kind would not necessarily carry conviction."

The threat to British sovereignty from membership of the Common Market was fiercely debated over the year.

The issues were aired during a Cabinet committee meeting in October before Britain's formal application to join the Common Market. Papers show that ministers were concerned about the power of the European Commission not only to enforce unpopular decisions but also to delay action Britain might wish to take.



Harold Wilson with Baroness Falkender, his former political secretary Marcia Williams, pictured in 1975

Personal tensions rise inside No 10

TENSIONS between Harold Wilson's formidable secretary Marcia Williams and official Downing Street staff are highlighted by a bureaucratic dispute over the right to use government photocopies during the election campaign.

While Downing Street accepted that an official should accompany Mr Wilson on his election tour in March, officials were concerned that equipment should not be used for party political purposes. The dispute has all the hallmarks of recent debates over civil service neutrality.

In a note dated March 7, 1966, at the start of the election campaign, Derek Mitchell, a Treasury high flier who was Mr Wilson's principal private secretary,

wrote: "The only problem not resolved is the one about the use of copying machines."

The dispute may have been fanned by the intense personal hostility between Mr Mitchell and Ms Williams. Mr Wilson's political secretary, Mr Mitchell was absolutely insistent that if any official machines had to be used, a note should be kept of all copies so that the Labour Party headquarters could be charged.

In a separate note to Ms Williams, he suggested that the House of Commons rate of 4d (1.6p) a copy would be about the right charge.

But the issue was clearly galling for staff at No 10, and Mr Mitchell wrote to the Prime Minister: "It would obviously

be better if use of the official machines could be made as a last resort and I am glad to hear that you are hoping to get one of your own. I am sure that would be a real convenience to you."

In another circular to staff at 10 Downing Street, Mr Mitchell announced that Mr Wilson had agreed to drop informal arrangements whereby messengers called at the party HQ, Transport House, to collect mail. In the note, Mr Mitchell said: "This is because it would be improper for civil servants to assist the party authorities in this way during the pre-election period."

With a note of prescience of Mr Wilson's victory at the poll, Mr Mitchell added: "The informal arrangement can, of course, be resumed after the election."

THE YEAR IN BRIEF

Mao's swim marathon a 'fiction'

Diplomatic speculation about the health of Mao Tse Tung reached a frenzy after he was photographed swimming in the Yangtze, allegedly covering 15 kilometres. In a detailed dispatch from the office of the British charge d'affaires in Peking, Leonard Appleby said the Chinese were determined to show their leader in good health, and added: "We are now waiting for him to cover the same distance walking on the water." Chairman Mao survived for another 10 years and did not die until 1976, at the age of 82.

MI5 saw 'Red plot' in strike

MI5 reported strong links between the Communist Party and activists in the National Union of Seamen, which was involved in a protracted strike against the Government's strict prices and incomes policy. The strike caused food shortages. A military plan was devised — though not enforced — to draft in 34,000 servicemen to move ships and run the docks.

Fear of mutiny saved Gurkhas

Harold Wilson considered disbanding the 4,000-strong Gurkha Brigade to save £9 million a year, but was warned by officials: "The possibility of mutiny cannot be ruled out. They are capable of strong and violent reactions if they feel they have been unfairly treated." The next year, plans were announced to reduce the brigade. It now numbers 4,000.

Attempt to block review of murder

The Home Secretary, Sir Frank Soskice, attempted to block a judicial review over the murder conviction of Timothy Evans, saying that such an inquiry would cause resentment among the police. A review concluded that Evans was "probably innocent" of killing his wife and daughter, for which he had been executed in 1950. The Queen granted a free pardon.

BBC berated over fledgling channel

The Prime Minister was scathing about the fledgling BBC2 at a time when the corporation was £10 million in debt. In correspondence with the BBC, which wanted to raise the £5 television licence fee by £1, he wrote: "I do not see why we needed to raise the licence fee to pay for a programme no one wants to see and many cannot see even if they wanted to."

Beatles beat the drum for Britain

The success of five concerts by the Beatles in Tokyo in July 1966 delighted British officials. "They swept the youth of Japan off their feet," the charge d'affaires at the embassy in Tokyo reported to the Foreign Office. "In sober truth, no recent event connected with the United Kingdom, with the sole exception of the British Exhibition in 1965, has made a comparable impact."

Alarm at callousness over Aberfan

A WHITEHALL suggestion that Harold Wilson's Government should say as little as possible about the Aberfan disaster was rejected by the Prime Minister. He noted in green ink on an official memo: "We must not look callous or complacent."

The documents chart a stream of meetings and discussions which began on October 22, the day after 116 children and 28 adults died when a coal pit's waste heap engulfed a school in a South Wales village. The discussions ended 11 months later when Lord Robens agreed to continue in his £12,500-a-year post as

chairman of the National Coal Board. The newly released files include some from 1967. Two weeks before an official inquiry's report on the disaster, civil servants proposed that the Government "say as little as possible" in response to the report and merely indicate that its findings would be carefully considered.

Mr Wilson noted on July 19: "I hope ministers will have agreed on something to say before publication. We must not look callous or complacent, or in any way passing by on the other side. It is important to decide whether we 'accept

the report." He must have received an advance copy immediately after writing those words. He added at the bottom of the page: "I have now looked at the report. It is devastating."

Mr Wilson suggested that Cledwyn Hughes, the Secretary of State for Wales, should consider making a statement to the Commons before publication, paying tribute to the tribunal, giving the main findings and saying that the Government accepted them.

Then say the tribunal makes a number of recommendations for future action, including legislation. The

ministers concerned are urged to consider these recommendations," Mr Wilson wrote. "While it is exceptional to make a statement before publication, the fact that the House is adjourning [for the summer recess] — combined with the public concern and the devastating nature of the report — makes this desirable."

The Prime Minister effectively rejected a suggestion that the Government should accept Lord Robens's resignation. On July 28, a note recording the views of a group of ministers said the future of Lord Robens was bound to be "the centre of speculation" when the report was published, although it did not blame him personally. "Our conclusion... is that the chairman may feel compelled to resign and that if he offers his resignation, the Government should accept it."

"There is not, in our view, a case against Lord Robens to justify his dismissal if he does not choose to resign. But he should not be pressed to stay." Mr Wilson marked the final passage and wrote in the margin: "I don't see the need for [this]. It may be better to press Robens to hold an immediate meeting of the board to consider the report."

Lord Robens, who had been a Labour MP and fellow member of the postwar Labour Government with Mr Wilson, continued in the post until 1971. In 1993, aged 82, he died from a stroke.

Duke's trip survived Argy-bargy

IF THE Duke of Edinburgh is skilled today in the art of creating headaches for government ministers, that may be through long practice.

The Duke's desire to go on a long, costly polo tour of Argentina in the autumn of 1966 provoked backroom bickering in Downing Street and Whitehall as officials tried to work out how the Duke could meet the bills without breaching the Government's new austerity measures. These included a £50-a-head limit on cash that could be taken on a holiday abroad.

The Sir Humphreys of the day were sucked into a web of memos which betrayed their search for a palatable solution — allowing the Duke to attend the tournament without living like a backpacker, but also without offending the Queen's subjects, who were all tightening their belts.

Luckily, the Argentine Government was shouldering most of the costs of board and lodging for the visiting British and American teams. Some Whitehall officials feared a late cancellation would offend and with a little help from the embassy in Buenos Aires, coupled with the Duke's agreement to perform a few public duties to water down the jet-set elements of the trip, he was able to set off, with or without the Prime Minister's blessing.

The British Government's chief scientific adviser, Sir Solly Zuckerman, wanted approval from Michael Stewart, then Foreign Secretary, for "what might well be construed as a further illustration of ice-breaking."

A Foreign Office note, headed "Anglo-Soviet Relations: A Mate for Chi-Chi" and writ-



Chi-Chi, right, and An-An during a tryst at London Zoo

Panda match was food for satire

DOWNING STREET and the Foreign Office were alarmed that attempts to raise London Zoo's Chi-Chi with a panda in Moscow would be used to satirise a forthcoming Soviet visit by Harold Wilson.

In 1964, the Soviet Union dropped a British proposal to match-make Chi-Chi and An-An. But two years later, Madame Fortseva, the Soviet Minister of Culture, was keen to pair off the pandas at Moscow Zoo.

The British Government's chief scientific adviser, Sir Solly Zuckerman, wanted approval from Michael Stewart, then Foreign Secretary, for "what might well be construed as a further illustration of ice-breaking."

A Foreign Office note, headed "Anglo-Soviet Relations: A Mate for Chi-Chi" and writ-

ten by a Mr H.F.T. Smith, described the proposal to mate "the sex-starved female panda" Chi-Chi with An-An. "I am not sure the proposal is consistent with our policy of détente but we also have an interest in rapprochement. I recommend that this union be blessed," he wrote.

A more senior official, Mr Greenhill, gave warning of the comic potential: "I agree, but let us get this matter out of the headlines well before the Prime Minister goes to Moscow, otherwise the two visits will become mixed in the public mind and worked to death by the TV comics and satirists."

The Foreign Secretary scribbled: "Yes indeed!" Sure enough, nine days later, on January 27, a cartoon in the *Daily Mirror* lampooned the situation.



The landslide took 144 lives. "We must not look complacent," Wilson wrote

England's World Cup victory strained relations with Argentina

WHILE the nation celebrated England's finest footballing hour, British diplomats found the World Cup something of a headache. The Foreign Office had to appease Argentina, which lost to the home side in a particularly acrimonious quarter-final. The surprise appearance of the North Koreans in the competition also caused concern.

Papers released today under the 30-year rule show how England's victory over the South American side raised feelings to a point where relations between the two countries could have been badly damaged. England won the match 1-0 after the Argentine captain, Antonio Rattin, was sent off by the German referee at Wembley in an exceptionally ill-tempered game. Afterwards Alf Ramsey, the England manager, described the Argentinians

as "animals" and Fifa, the sport's ruling body, issued them with an official reprimand.

However, a dispatch from the British Embassy in Buenos Aires describes how the Argentine team was given a hero's welcome on their return. While thousands waited two hours in the rain to give the side a "tumultuous" homecoming, the embassy received "hundreds" of abusive phone calls. Demonstrators gathered at the ambassador's house and extra guards had to be posted at a trade fair after gangs of youths "chanting and jeering" invaded the British stand, tore up photographs and pinned a woman receptionist in a corner.

The dispatch notes that even the more balanced Argentine newspapers were claiming that the World Cup had been snatched from their team by the

German referee, whose appointment was part of a "blatant conspiracy to defraud the South Americans" and keep the trophy in Europe. "Most Argentinians quite sincerely believe that the way the whole tournament was managed, or mismanaged, was a dirty business and a stain on the British reputation for sportsmanship and honesty," the dispatch said.

"While it would be a mistake to take all this too seriously, it will certainly not be laughed off or preached about. It will not upset our normal good relations with the great majority of sensible Argentinians, but it has left a scar on our popular image which we shall not fail to be reminded of whenever, for one reason or another in the future, feelings become strained."

However, it was not just the Argentinians who caused the Foreign Office

concern. The qualification of Communist North Korea for the finals threatened to spark a diplomatic incident. South Korea protested vigorously through its Ambassador in London, claiming that the team should not be allowed to set foot on British soil.

The Foreign Office agonised over when the North Korean flag could be flown and the country's national anthem sung.

Moreover, the North Koreans confounded the Football Association by beating Italy to win a place in the quarter-finals.

"Thank heaven that Portugal finally dispatched the giant killers and we were spared an England/North Korea match at Wembley," one official noted after the North Koreans had been beaten.



The Argentine captain Antonio Rattin, No 10, being sent off in the quarter-finals

SATURDAY
IN THE TIMES

STRANGE FRUIT

Ginny Dougary
meets Jeanette
Winterson
in the Magazine



TV DINNERS

Frances Bissell on how
to be a telly-chef
in Weekend

Israel and PLO put finishing touches to Hebron accord

By ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

AFTER agreeing on terms for its withdrawal from most of Hebron, Israel yesterday continued to haggle with the Palestine Liberation Organisation over prisoner releases and target dates for future West Bank handovers, Palestinian negotiators said.

At the same time, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, postponed his proposed summit with Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority, to deal with more pressing concerns, especially the safe passage through the Knesset of his austerity budget. Palestinian officials were told that the meeting could take place today.

Earlier, Mr Arafat said he was ready to meet Mr Netanyahu to seal an accord transferring 80 per cent of Hebron to Palestinian rule.

The remaining differences between the two sides include Mr Arafat's demand for a joint Palestinian police presence

around the Tomb of the Patriarchs, the burial place of Abraham and Sarah. The shrine is holy to both Muslims and Jews. Mr Arafat is also demanding that Israel commit itself to a timetable for further troop redeployments in rural areas of the West Bank.

Dr Dore Gold, Mr Netanyahu's diplomatic adviser, and other Israeli officials said last night that there was now little left for the negotiators to do, adding that the time had come for the leaders to hold another summit and complete the accord. "We have exhausted the negotiations. If there are differences, they should be discussed between the leaders themselves," one of Mr Netanyahu's aides said.

Mr Netanyahu has seemed isolated in recent days by a series of developments in his parliament aimed not just at his peace proposals, but at his plans for a Thatcherite economic revolution, including

budget cuts and privatisation. In addition, with six members of his Cabinet now prepared to vote against the Hebron deal, Mr Netanyahu threw out a challenge to his critics. He announced that he would bring the agreement before the Knesset for approval in order to achieve a broader consensus. At the same time, officials of the right-wing Likud Party are trying to minimise the clear lack of enthusiasm among his own supporters for the deal.

They recalled the example of the late Prime Minister Menachem Begin, also a Likud leader, who made peace with Egypt. At the time Mr Begin was also forced to rely on the support of the opposition Labour Party to secure approval for the Camp David accords.

Tensions remained high in Hebron yesterday and Palestinian youths scuffled with Jewish settlers. Earlier in the day some settlers broke into a



Palestinian policemen train in the West Bank village of Dahariya yesterday. They will be deployed in Hebron after the partial withdrawal of Israeli security forces under an agreement said to be close last night

Palestinian market area, claiming it was Jewish property. Some were detained but later released.

In a separate development yesterday, Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam of Syria said Washington had given Syria "written commitments"

to secure an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Mr Khaddam also ruled out a resumption of Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations as long as the Israeli Government did not change its hard-line position. Israeli warplanes launched

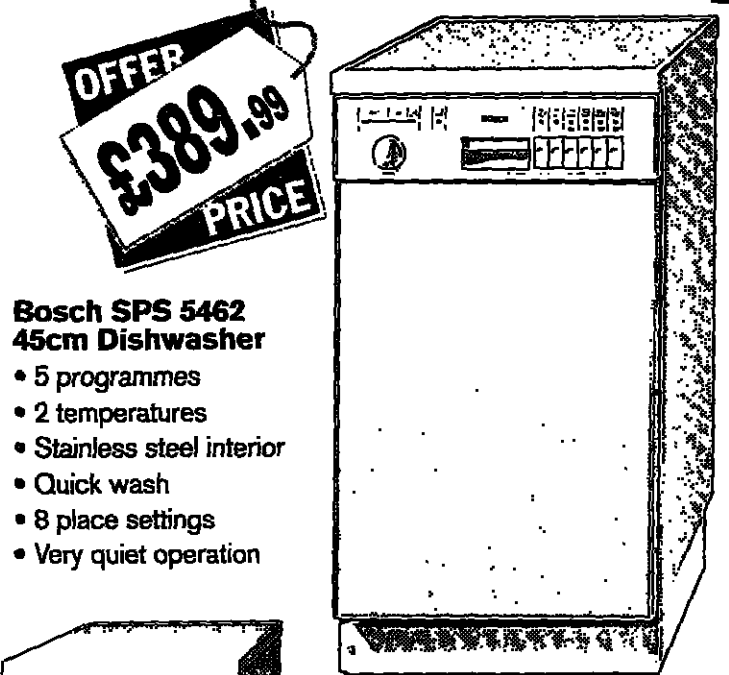
rockets against suspected guerrilla targets in the hills of southern Lebanon last night, guerrilla and pro-Israeli militia sources said. Trial opens: The trial of four Israeli right-wing extremists accused of inciting racial hatred opened in Jerusalem

yesterday. They published a book, *Baruch, a Real Man*, that allegedly glorifies Baruch Goldstein, the American-born Jewish settler who opened fire during Friday prayers in Hebron's Al-Ibrahimi Mosque in 1994, killing 29 Palestinians. (AFP)

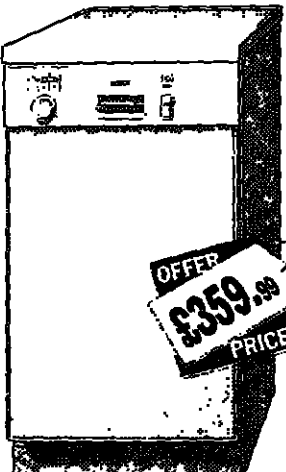
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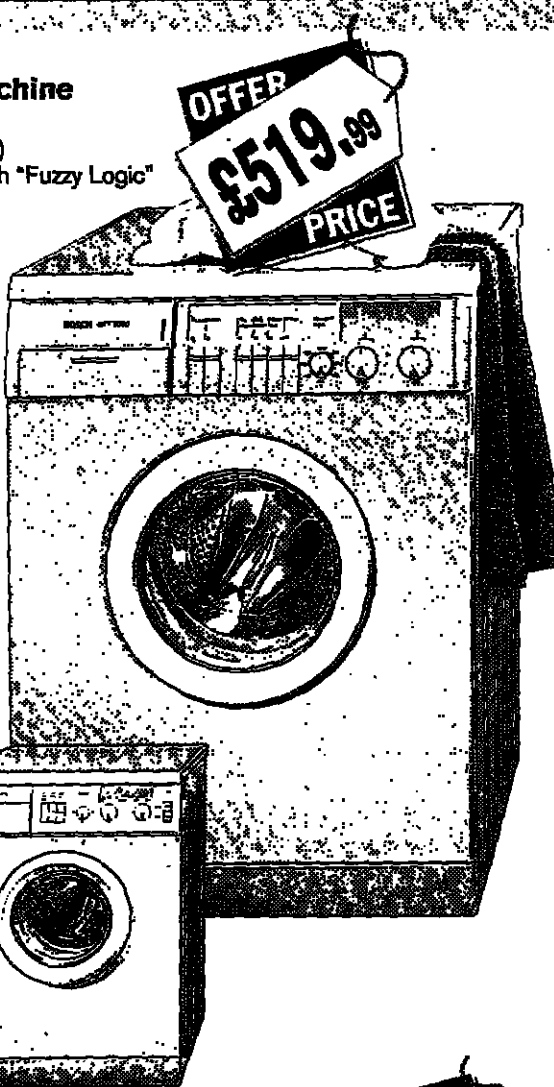
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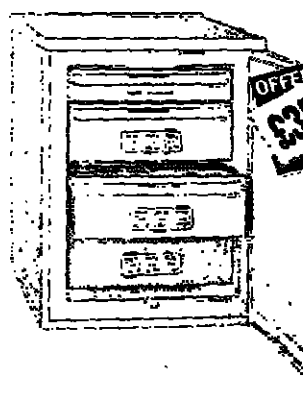


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Saddam turns on family in fear of betrayal

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein of Iraq is now so afraid there are traitors within his family that he is relying increasingly on non-relatives to be his closest political advisers, according to intelligence sources.

The dominant group in the ruling hierarchy around the Iraqi leader now includes two cousins. The remainder have no family connection.

The attempted assassination of his son Uday on December 12 has underlined the potential threat to a regime which Saddam has established over the years to sustain his rule.

The Takriti clan, which in the past has been the bedrock for Saddam's survival, has never been so divided. Two of the groups within the clan, the Ibrahimis, which includes his three brothers, and the Majidis, cousins on his father's side, are reported to hate Saddam and his two sons, Uday and Kousai.

Kousai, the younger son, heads Saddam's security apparatus. The Iraqi regime has at least five security and intelligence bodies, each of which has overlapping powers. Kousai Saddam controls them all. He also commands the Republican Guards whose main task is to protect the regime.

For many years, Saddam used his three brothers on his mother's side, Sabawi, Watban and Barazan, to help to prop up his regime. They occupied key positions in the leadership.

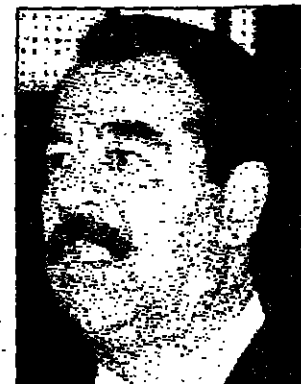
However, two of the brothers, Sabawi, former head of the Iraqi national security forces, and Watban, a former Minister of the Interior, were dismissed last year and accused by Saddam of corruption, exploitation of state property for personal purposes, cruelty and extortion. Barazan, formerly chief of Iraqi intelligence, was sacked recently and is now Baghdad's Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva. According

to intelligence sources, the main group of political advisers around the Iraqi President include Sultan Hashem Ahmad, formerly the army Chief of Staff and now the Defence Minister, who has no political ambitions. Muhammad Amer Rashid, a former Deputy Minister of Industry and now the Petroleum Minister, and Amer Hamoudi Hasan al-Saadi, Saddam's adviser on industry who also serves as the President's representative for clandestine missions.

The two cousins who remain in the inner circle are Abdul Hamid Mahmood, Saddam's personal secretary and chief of the apparatus responsible for his security, and Mouzameh Saab al-Hasan al-Takriti, chairman of the committee supervising the Fedayin of Saddam organisation, whose function is the defence of Iraq and achievements of "the revolution".

The intelligence sources said that Salida Kheiralla Tiflah, Saddam's wife and mother of Uday and Kousai, was currently under house arrest after the Iraqi President accused her of trying to assassinate him.

The sources said: "Saddam has succeeded in turning his family against him, despite the benefits of power they enjoyed and their common interest that he retains the leadership."



Saddam's accused wife

Paris-Madrid pact keeps Eta in check

FROM TUNIKU VARADARAJAN IN SAN SEBASTIAN

A NEW anti-terrorist alliance between Spain and France has ensured that 1996 will go down as the year in which Eta, the Basque separatist group, suffered its leanest period for almost a quarter of a century.

The arrest yesterday of five Eta radicals, members of a youth group dedicated to street violence in Navarre, only bolsters the belief that the Spanish police could at last have Eta on the ropes.

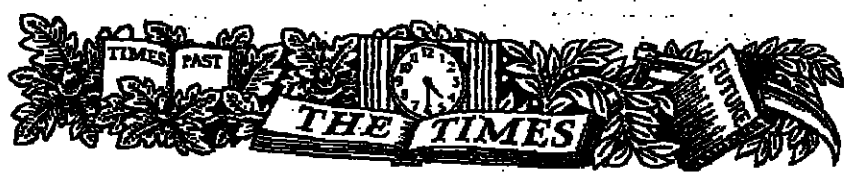
Five people have been killed by Eta in the past 12 months, fewer than in any year since 1972, when the group had barely begun its violent campaign for an independent Basque state. At the peak of its powers, Eta murdered 119 people in 1979 and 123 in 1980.

With a flurry of blows, including the arrest of six leading terrorists in the past six months, the French police have boosted the morale of their Spanish counterparts.

These successes flow from an unprecedented close collaboration between the Spanish and French governments, which began last May when a conservative administration took office in Madrid.

The French have not always been so helpful to Madrid and the Basque separatist group historically has used southern France as a refuge.

French governments, until very recently, mistrusted Spain's judicial system, never believing that it had been purged entirely of its from the Franco era. In addition, the "Basque problem" tended to be viewed in Paris with a certain romanticism, also a hangover from the age of the Spanish dictatorship. François Mitterrand and, before him, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, played cat and mouse with Spain, offering only lukewarm collaboration in the fight against Eta.



BENEATH THE ICE

The chill that Europeans should really worry about

All Europe has been "sent to Siberia" for New Year, 1997. So deep a freeze has, for most British people, a frisson of pleasure about it, pictured from the well-warmed house, the images of Venice's frozen lagoon and the snow-laden palm-trees of Mediterranean resorts compensate in poetry for the treachery of icy roads and pavements and lend drama to the mere grey gloom of a typical British January. Further east, in Hungary where the thermometer dipped this week to a 76-year low or in fuel-starved Bulgaria and Romania, such temperatures are a matter of dread, of frostbite for many and death for society's most vulnerable.

Yet when the meteorological thaw comes, the prospects in most of Central and Eastern Europe look brighter than for many years. It is in Western Europe, where in 1990 forecasters enthused about the "European decade" to come, that winter gnaws deep into society's bones and electorates readily take the frozen ground as a metaphor for economic stagnation and the impotence or incompetence of politicians. France's Jacques Chirac, who yesterday lectured his compatriots that their gloom was irrational, is not alone in his frustration at their refusal to take comfort in sharply reduced inflation, somewhat improved public finances and the vote of confidence offered by Europe's booming stockmarkets. John Major, with better reason since Britain is now Western Europe's star economic performer, waits in vain for his political dividend. But until unemployment retreats from its current postwar record, "feel-good" sermons are a waste of breath.

In France, 12.7 per cent are now on the official jobless roster — and Insee, the national statistical institute, expects this to rise to 13 per cent this year. Italy is nearly as badly off overall — and much worse off in the impoverished south. Spain's problems make Italy's seem light. Germany, where for historical reasons joblessness has a specially

sharp impact on the national psyche, has more than four million on the dole. In Sweden, if extensive state make-work schemes were excluded the official rate of 8 per cent would nearly double, to 15 per cent.

This last statistic underlines a troubling truth. With European Union governments spending £130 billion a year on employment-related schemes, it has never been more evident that state efforts at direct job-creation work against the grain of the markets which it should be the concern of governments to set free. It diverts energy from what the State can do: temper the violence of economic cycles by expanding deficits in recession and tightening policy as growth picks up; and increase labour flexibility by overhauling social welfare systems. But in most EU countries, macro-economic flexibility has been sacrificed to the political goal of meeting the 1999 target for EMU. The pain of public belt-tightening at a time of low growth meanwhile makes workers more reluctant than ever to surrender benefits which they see as their remaining cushion against the new insecurity.

"Europe" is increasingly seen as a straitjacket, with severe consequences including the growing popularity of extremist parties. Seeing this, some in France, such as Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, architect of the EMS, would now sacrifice the *franc fort* for higher growth. This week Gerhard Schröder, a contender for leadership of the German Social Democrat Party, also broke ranks to say that "incredible social and political friction" is too high a price for EMU. But such dissent is still rare: Europe's politicians cling to EMU with the fatalism of early Christian martyrs. The EU is the drop-out in a global economy which is expected to grow this year by a healthy 4.1 per cent. When its politicians finally feel the icicles down their spines, it will be time to celebrate the arrival of a new year, not before.

LIEDER WRITER

Two hundred years ago: a great songwriter first filled his lungs

Judged by normal standards Franz Schubert was a dismal failure. The 12th of 18 children born into a penniless Viennese schoolmaster's family, he lived most of his life in squalid poverty — unemployed, scrounging off friends. Attempts to sell his music ended in fiasco. The only public concert of his music in his lifetime produced not a single review; Paganini was playing in town on the same night. Even Schubert's love life was a sad business, emotionally unstable and medically disastrous. Whether syphilis hastened his death from typhoid at 31 is disputed but it certainly led to the black depressions that clouded his last years.

All of which proves only one thing: genius cannot be judged by normal standards. On January 31, the 200th anniversary of Schubert's birth, the world will celebrate not a failure, but the greatest songwriter of all: a man incapable of breathing without composing, and incapable of composing without spinning a golden thread of melody.

Considering how rarely Schubert received a commission, the vast amount of music he produced in his short life is astonishing. There are nine symphonies (including two, the sublime *Unfinished* and the majestic *Great C Major*, that rank with the best); nine operas; dozens of choral works; and a huge quantity of wonderful chamber pieces.

But his 600 songs must take precedence. They were dashed off at a feverish rate. During 1815 alone, while Europe's more militant spirits were slogging it out in the Belgian mud, the teenage Schubert wrote 144 superb songs, including eight in a day. Pop groups who think they are being wildly creative if they produce an album's worth of songs in a year should take note. So fast did tunes come to Schubert that he often ran out

of lyrics. He set his favourite Goethe and Schiller poems up to six times each. Before he came along, the song was regarded as a lightweight form. Schubert showed that it could carry deep emotions without sacrificing its melodic grace or miniature essence. And his songs took music to the heart of the Romantic movement.

Like much Romantic art, they portray life as a journey through landscape. But

Schubert's is a landscape of aural memory, in which familiar sounds — the huntsman's horn, a stream, the wind in trees — take on profound spiritual significance. Schubert was the first songwriter to realise that music need not slavishly mirror the words it accompanies; indeed, it may be at its most unsettling when it evokes something quite contrary to the surface meaning.

Nowhere is this power to disturb at a subliminal level more evident than in his last song-cycle, *Winterreise*: a poet's surreal journey across a frozen landscape towards death. It is one of the great testaments of despair, and its influence extends deep into our own century's music, in the troubled symphonies of Mahler and Shostakovich and the harrowing operas of Alban Berg.

It ends with the sound of an organ-grinder churning out a tawdry little scrap of a tune. In his darkest moments Schubert, who knew neither fame nor fortune nor lasting love, must have felt himself to be that organ-grinder: a missing person whom nobody misses, shuffling along a road to oblivion in a bleak midwinter. But the tunes of this organ-grinder have echoed across the continents and down the centuries. Two hundred years on, Schubert's heavenly melodies live more securely in the hearts of music-lovers than he would ever have dared to hope.



AULD FREDDIE FRINTON

For the Germans, New Year means Dinner for One

For the puritan English New Year's Day brings new calendars and a resolution to practise giving up things for Lent. All the British see New Year in by simulating a knowledge of the other verses of *Auld Lang Syne* and by men in kilts crooning and jiggling on television. For Scots Hogmanay now entails carrying bottles of whisky instead of lumps of coal in their overcoat pockets into other people's homes. And making their calls by taxi. And so for most natives New Year comes in with a hangover, which may still be being worked on north of the border this-morning on Neer Day. But for the Germans new year means Freddie Frinton.

For this forgotten English music hall comedian's film, *Dinner for One*, has become a cult of the German new year festivities. By switching channels on television a serious German celebrant of New Year's Eve can view his film over and over again until midnight. It lasts only 17 minutes. And it tells a simple tale.

Miss Sophy is celebrating her 90th birthday with a party for her admirers. But they are all dead. So her butler stands in for each of them in turn, as well as serving a sort of Mad Butler's Tea Party. As Admiral Von Schneider he clicks his heels, as Mr Winterbottom he raises his glass, as Mr Pomeroy he gazes amorously at his hostess. And he has to drink his toasts in sherry, champagne, and other wines and spirits at

the rate of four glasses to every one of Miss Sophy's. Not surprisingly he stumbles over the tiger skin rug as he brings in each new course. And after dinner, as he staggers up the stairs with Miss Sophy in his arms, he asks her deadpan whether it is to be the same procedure this year as usual.

The point of any anniversary ritual is that it should be the same every year. So the German businessman who saw *Dinner for One* as a music hall sketch on Blackpool pier 33 years ago, and had it filmed as a typical example of English humour, was creating an instant tradition. It combines the necessary elements of nostalgia, sentimentality and northern over-indulgence for the ending of the year. It confirms stereotypes about British class and reticence as satisfactorily as *Allo Allo* did about German and French manners for British viewers.

All traditions were once new. The Christmas tree and stockings were imported by our German monarchs and their consorts. Goose rather than turkey is the more traditional new year bird. But in our electronic age, the traditions of the future are continually being created on our screens and tapes. So, just for a change next new year, British and German programme planners should exchange Freddie Frinton for Morecambe and Wise and *The Sound of Music*. National stereotypes should laugh at themselves once in a while. Because everyone else does.

Invitation to pray for Africa in 1997

From the Director of the United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and others

Sir, We write as a group of individuals from (or deeply involved in) Africa, who are working in our various ways in support of conflict resolution, economic and social justice and the realisation of basic human rights standards everywhere in that great continent.

We are also believers in the power of prayer and we would like, through your columns, to invite people of any faith to join with us — preferably each day — in 1997 to pray for Africa in these simple words:

God bless Africa.
Guard her people.
Guide her rulers.
And give her peace.

Yours sincerely,
MALCOLM HARPER,
Director, United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
CHARLES ANONE,
International Welfare Association.
ALEXANDER BORG OLIVIER,
United Nations Office and Information Centre, London.
KEITH CLEMENTS,
Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland.
TREVOR HUDDLESTON,
YANIRU KIHORO,
Abantu for Development.
MICHAEL TAYLOR,
Christian Aid,
3 Whitehall Court, SW1,
December 30.

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Abantu for Development.
MICHAEL TAYLOR,
Christian Aid,
3 Whitehall Court, SW1,
December 30.

PoWs in Italy

From Mr J. Keith Killby

Sir, Major Sam Derry (Obituary, December 27), Monsignor O'Flaherty, the British Minister to the Vatican and his "Figaro" of a butler all did excellent work hiding and provisioning Allied PoWs in Rome after the Italian Armistice of September 1943.

However, thousands of PoWs "on the run" in Italy kept to the remote countryside. Some 3,000 of us escaped from a camp near the Adriatic coast two or three days after the Armistice. Within 24 hours we all, it seemed, had been spontaneously hidden and fed by the Italian countryside.

To record and, in a small way, to compensate for that generosity and courage, the Monte San Martino Trust was founded by former PoWs to give study bursaries in this country to young Italians. In six years some sixty bursaries have been awarded, mostly to descendants of those who helped us — four of whom had grandparents shot for so doing.

Yours very truly,
J. KEITH KILLBY
(Honorary Secretary),
Monte San Martino Trust,
Flat 7, 18 Lambol Road, NW3,
December 27.

Fair shares in business

From Mr John Argenti

Sir, I am at a loss to understand what the Centre for Tomorrow's Company is saying ("Boardrooms too biased towards the shareholders", report, Business, December 30). Are they suggesting that a company should not be run for the benefit of the shareholders (ie, with just one bottom line) but for the benefit of all the stakeholders — in other words with five bottom lines, one each for the employees, the customers, the shareholders, the suppliers and the community? What a nightmare.

The idea that companies "should be run for all concerned" has always been highly seductive; but, with few exceptions, several decades of nationalisation, communes, kibbutzim, mutuals, co-operatives, communism and the "social market" generally suggest that, for reasons too numerous to mention here, it simply does not work. Heaven protect us from another experiment on these lines.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN ARGENTI,
Petitree Lodge,
Woodbridge, Suffolk,
December 30.

Melting pots

From Mr Richard and Mr Peter Harden

Sir, It is a shame that self-confessed New Yorker, Mr Irwin Stelzer ("A tale of gastronomy in two cities", December 19) compares the restaurant culture of the Big Apple with a London which does not exist.

Anyone who says, for example, that "Londoners' infatuation with Thai cooking is attributable in good part to the opening here of New York's Vong" might fairly be asked to explain how it is that the effect preceded its alleged cause by about half a decade.

And anyone who largely blames service deficiencies on the fact that many London staff "come from Italy, where casualness has a meaning all its own" seems oblivious to the melting pot of nationalities represented by London's waiting staff (among which Italians seem nowadays to be, if anything, under-represented).

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD HARDEN,
PETER HARDEN,
(Editors), *Harden's Guides*,
20 Villiers Street, WC2,
December 23.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Welfare of the child paramount in adoption process

From Professor Emeritus John Triseliotis

Sir, The Prime Minister's plea to privatise adoption (report, December 27) will do nothing more than replace the antics of a handful of politically correct individuals with political doctrine, none of which has anything to do with the welfare of children.

For over twenty years now and because of social and demographic changes very few babies are being adopted each year. This is unlikely to change.

Britain, however, has possibly the best record anywhere, and certainly compared with continental Europe, in the way it has found permanent adoptive homes for older children and children with special needs. This has largely been due to the dedication of thousands of committed social workers, in both voluntary and local authority social services departments, who developed new skills and new ways of helping children to start a new life in new families. The research evidence about these achievements is irrefutable.

The example from the United States, where independent and third party adoptions have been allowed to flourish, has exposed the exploitation and sometimes covert sale of children to an extent only surpassed by some developing countries.

Adoption policy and practice need

to be based on what is empirically known to be good for children, rather than what is seen to be good for the market and the interests of the adults. A return to the abuses of the last century is not the answer. The answer is to consolidate and build on the achievements so far.

Yours faithfully,
J. TRISELIOTIS
(International Social Sciences Institute,
University of Edinburgh,
20 Braid Farm Road,
Edinburgh 10,
December 30.

From Mr Malcolm Hanney
Sir, You report Sir William Utting as saying that the adoption process ought to be carried out by government and not delegated to other authorities. This appears to me somewhat blinkered.

My wife and I adopted our children when we were living in the United States. We worked through a charitable organisation that put the interests of the child first, those of the birth-mother second, and of the adoptive parents third. The birthmother had a real say in who would be the parents of her child. In such circumstances, adoption can represent a real alternative to abortion which, as you report (December 28), was a choice taken by 170,000 women in the UK last year.

As a councillor on Bath and North East Somerset Council and a member of its adoption and fostering panel, I know how complex the issues of children in care and adoption are. I do not believe that the current arrangements should never be reviewed or questioned but we must be careful not to allow political correctness to have an undue influence.

The comments of the Professor of Social Work, at East Anglia University, that giving up a baby for adoption can present long-term mental health problems and "has a similar impact to being sexually assaulted", are depressing to say the least. Adoption has, unfortunately, become a less straightforward option than abortion for a pregnant woman unable or unwilling to keep her child.

My wife and I will try to convey to our children how aged 0 and 3 how difficult it was for their birthmothers to go through pregnancy when the choice of abortion was available, and to choose and trust us to be the adoptive parents of their children. We can only hope that our children, when they are older, will love and respect their birthmothers for making that choice and giving them life.

Yours faithfully,
MALCOLM HANNEY,
Magna House, Battle Lane,
Chew Magna, Somerset,
December 31.

Royal engagements

From Mr Tim O'Donovan

Sir, I have carried out a survey of the official engagements undertaken by the Royal Family during 1996, as reported in the Court Circular:

	A	B	C	D	E
The Queen	155	79	275	509	76
Duke of Edinburgh	172	149	45	364	255
Queen Mother	38	11	19	58	7
Prince of Wales	227	87	103	417	164
Duke of York	52	13	11	76	53
Prince Edward	49	44	22	115	55
Princess Royal	307	113	94	514	93
Princess Margaret	86	22	6	114	18
Duke of Gloucester	107	30	14	151	76
Duchess of Gloucester	67	29	15	128	19
Duke of Kent	136	45	25	206	51
Duchess of Kent	53	6	6	65	10
Princess Alexandra	86	21	12	119	7

A official visits, opening ceremonies and other engagements

B receptions, lunches, dinners and banquets

C other engagements, including investitures, meetings attended and audiences given

D total number of engagements in UK

E engagements on official overseas tours

Twenty-eight engagements by the Princess of Wales were recorded in the Court Circular, prior to the decree absolute of her divorce, declared on August 28.

Gulf War illness

From Mr Tam Dalzell, MP for Lintithgow (Labour)

Sir, If Earl Baldwin of Bewdley and the former Speaker and their co-signatories (letter, December 28) had glanced through Hansard they would have noticed that the Opposition Defence Spokesman, David Clark, first raised what is now known as Gulf War syndrome on June 10, 1993. Moreover the Gulf War Veterans Association was formed as a result of a meeting in his office in mid-1994.

If there is to be "credit" it should go to the GWVA. True, the Countess of Mar had asked many questions on sheep-dip and organophosphates,

The Royal Family carried out a total of 3,712 official engagements at home and overseas. Charities are important beneficiaries of this work: for example, the Prince of Wales's charities raised £20 million this year for underprivileged young people, the homeless and disabled.

It must not be forgotten that, in addition to the duration of these engagements, there is also the time taken in preparation, whether it be a visit, investiture or speech.

Except for Christmas Day and Easter Day, the Queen effectively never has a day off from the official red boxes which pursue her everywhere. Again, the Queen Mother has continued to work at the remarkable age of 96.

Overseas visits are packed with engagements. In the case of the Queen's and Prince Philip's visit to Thailand in October, five gruelling days were spent in heat and humidity, with no time to acclimatise: tough going for two people who are well over normal retirement age.

Yours faithfully,
TIM O'DONOVAN,
Mariners,
The Avenue, Datchet, Berkshire,
December 31.

Royal succession

From Mr Stuart Dunsford

Sir, It is doubtful whether Kaiser Wilhelm II would really have succeeded to the British throne in August 1901 had Lord Archer's proposed rules for the royal succession been in place (letter, December 17, 20, 26).

Under these rules the Princess Royal, as the eldest of Queen Victoria's children, would indeed have been heir to the throne, but it is unlikely that, as the heir, she would have been married to a prince in line of succession to the Prussian crown.

She would have remained in Britain being prepared for her destiny, as was her mother before her accession. Any marriage would probably have been to a minor prince, who would be agreeable to spending the rest of his life in this country.

Yours faithfully,
STUART DUNSFORD,
183 Sheen Lane, East Sheen, SW14,
December 30.

Profit margin

From Mr Gerhard Both, CEng, MIMechE

Sir, I have been looking for a long time for such a good example of the private sector's greed for profit as that presented by your report "Eritrea labours to put historic railway back on the tracks" (December 21).

A private consortium of "experts" presented the Eritrean Government with an estimate of £250 million for the restoration of the railway: public ownership managed to do the job successfully with only £3 million.

A mark-up of more than 8,000 per cent by private enterprise? I am not surprised. In my own experience this is not too unusual.

Yours sincerely,
G. BOTH,
o Newick Close,
Seaford, East Sussex,
December 24.

Forever young?

From Mr Christopher Godley

Sir, I was delighted to read the letter from my father, Lord Kilbracken, on the subject of "father who smokes" (December 30). In it, he describes himself as a smoking father with young children.

Tomorrow is my 52nd birthday! Yours etc.
CHRISTOPHER GODLEY,
Four Firs, Marley Lane,
Haslemere, Surrey,
New Year's Eve.

Young as you feel

From Mr Robert A. Crawford

Sir, Mr Donald Cross (letter, December 19) raises a matter of relativity over the term "elderly" for a man of 62. I, 77, am asked to fill Help the Aged envelopes.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT A. CRAWFORD,
8 Acacia Avenue,
Ruislip, Middlesex.

Sands of time

From Miss Gillian Ross

Sir, It is, I fear, true that the older one gets, the quicker time passes. "Infinitesimal" is the only way I can describe the gap between the end of one football season and the start of the next.

But wait — in the space of what seemed no longer than 24 hours "leaves on the line" became "the wrong type of snow".

Time is slipping away before my very eyes.
Yours etc.
GILLIAN A. ROSS,
20 Turners Meadow Way,
Beckenham, Kent,
December 30.

Gas and gaiters

From Mr W. Woodruff

Sir, Replying to a complaint, a letter I received from British Gas starts: "Further to our convocation on 10 December".

Well, I suppose it might work.

Yours in faith,
W. WOODRUFF,
Great Oaks, 36 Court Road,
Ickenham, Middlesex,
December 24.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

Fully furnished

From Mr S. B. C. Eveleigh

Sir, Conjugating *mensa* (the table not the organisation), aged 8, I wondered at the need for a vocative, believing it unlikely that any sane person would address furniture.

Years later, working for the planning committee of an inner-London borough, I realised how present the Romans were (letters, December 18, 23 and 30).

Yours faithfully,
SHAUN EVELEGH,
Cairnbrook,
Fairy Road, Seaview,
Isle of Wight,
December 30.

SOCIAL NEWS

Prince Edward, as Patron, will attend concert given by the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on Sunday, January 5.

New Year's Day birthdays

Dr Jack Birks, company chairman, 77; Lord Cotnam, 55; Sir James Crane, former HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, 76; Mr John Fuller, writer, 60; Lord Kingsland, QC, 55; Baroness Lloyd of Highbury, 69; Sir Albert McQuarrie, former MP, 79; Dr James Merriman, former chairman, National Computing Centre, 82; Mr James Moorhouse, MEP, 73; Colonel P.A. Porteus, VC, 79; Mrs Patricia Purdy, former president, National Council of Women of Great Britain, 68; Professor R.A. Raphael, FRS, chemist, 76; Mr Lawrence Rowe, cricketer, 48; Mr J.D. Sallinger, author, 78; Lord Swansea, 72.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Lorenzo de Medici (The Magnificent), Florence, 1449; Katherine Philips, poet, London, 1631; Paul Revere, American patriot, Boston, Massachusetts, 1735; Maria Edgeworth, novelist, Blackborough, Oxfordshire, 1767; Arthur Hugh Clough, poet, Liverpool, 1819; Sir James Frazer, anthropologist, Glasgow, 1854; Henry Handel Richardson (pen-name of Ethel Florence Lindesay), novelist, Melbourne, 1870; E.M. Forster, novelist, London, 1879; William Fox, film producer, Hungary, 1879; Martin Niemöller, anti-Nazi priest, Lipstadt, Germany, 1892; J. Edgar Hoover, founder of the FBI, Washington, 1895; H.A.R. (Kim) Philby, British double agent, Ambala, India, 1911; Jack de Manin, broadcaster, 1914.

DEATHS: William Wycherley, dramatist, London, 1716; James Francis Edward Stuart, the "Old Pretender", Rome, 1766; Johann Christian Bach, composer, London, 1782; Heinrich Heine, physician, Bonn, 1856; Sir Edwin Lutyens, architect, London, 1944; Maurice Chevalier, actor and singer, Paris, 1972; John Aloysius Costello, Prime Minister of Ireland 1948-51 and 1954-57, 1976.

The *Daily Universal Register* (renamed *The Times* on January 1, 1788), was founded, 1785.

Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland came into force, 1801.

The Commonwealth of Australia was established with Edmund Barton as the first prime minister, 1901.

Farming ceased to be legal tender, 1961.

Britain entered the Common Market, 1973.

Church of Scotland

Introduction
The Rev John Birrell, to full-time Chaplain at Perth Royal Infirmary.

Ordination and induction
The Rev Jennifer Bood, Part-time Associate to South Leith, Edinburgh.

The Rev Linda J. Broadley to Caputh, Clunie and Kinclaven.

The Rev Dennis S. Rose, to Kirkmahone.

Translations
The Rev A David K. Arnold, from Netherlee, Glasgow to Hope Park, St Andrews.

The Rev Kevin MacKenzie, from Ochiltree to Stair to Westwood, East Renfrewshire.

The Rev Harry J. Brown, from Benholm and Johnstons to Garroch St Cyrus to Menzieshill, Dundee.

Retirements
The Rev H Marshall Gibson, from St Thomas' Galloway, Glasgow.

The Rev Peter Youngson, from St Andrews, Kirkcubright.

The Rev Alexander Muir, from Carinish.

The Rev Philip Earnshaw, from Pollokshields, Glasgow.

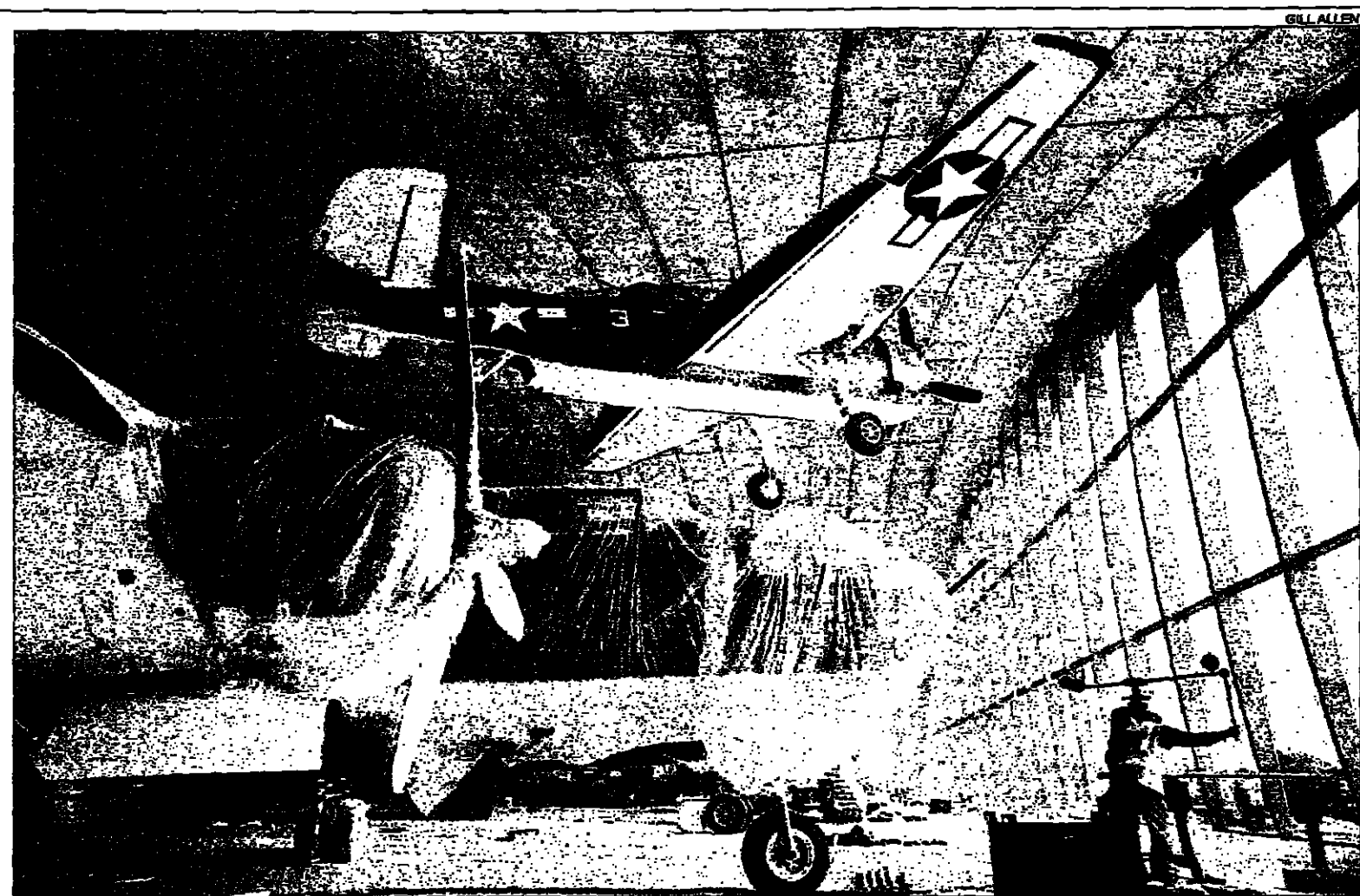
The Rev John M. MacArthur, from St Columba, Glasgow.

The Rev Gilbert Thomson, from Christ's Kirk, Glenrothes.

Auditory Minister ordained
The Rev James H Simpson, to Trinity, Dundee.

Appointments

Nuffield Trust for the Forces of the Crown
Alderman Sir Brian Jenkins has been appointed a Trustee with effect from December 31.



A view from inside the new hangar designed by Sir Norman Foster to house American war planes at Duxford air museum

£11m air museum is ready for takeoff

By JOHN SHAW

CHRISTMAS greetings are still scrawled in the cockpit window of a B52 bomber and workmen's litter covers the floor, but work is about to finish on one of the most striking new museums in Europe.

The £11 million American air museum at Duxford near Cambridge, designed by Sir Norman Foster, will be completed next month and formally handed over to the Imperial War Museum. The interior will then be fitted out ready for an opening in June or July.

It will house 21 historic American military aircraft from a First World War biplane to supersonic jets used in the Gulf War. Some exhibits are suspended from the ceiling as if in flight like a black U2 spy plane which carried out missions over China in the early Sixties.

The building is a tribute not only to the rise of American global air power but is also intended as a memorial to the 30,000 US airmen who were killed flying from British bases, including Duxford, during the Second World War.

The scheme is a flagship project for the Heritage Lottery Fund. Frank Crosby, marketing manager at Duxford, said it was the first major museum construction project completed from start to finish with £6.5 million of lottery money. "The fund

provided the bulk of the money with the rest coming from private sources. They ranged from Saudi Arabia which contributed \$1 million (about £600,000) to mailshots among servicemen and companies in the United States. We still need \$1 million."

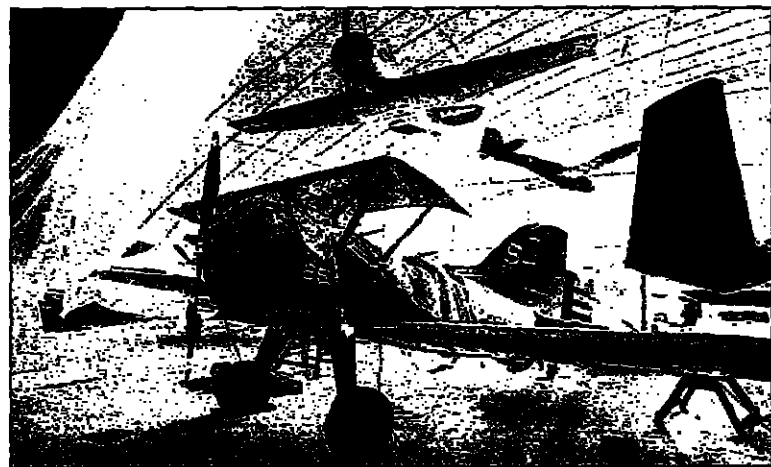
Looking out over the exhibits, many shrouded in protective plastic sheeting, he said: "We are confident about raising the money. This is a major scheme which will be one of the finest museums in Europe."

The aircraft have been arranged under a huge pre-cast concrete span with massive windows at one end which can lift up to allow exhibits to be changed. Computer-aided design techniques were used to arrange the aircraft on the 77,000 sq ft space before they were moved in before Christmas.

Sir Norman has designed the building as a section of a torus, a geometric structure the public will recognise as being like part of an aircraft wing tip, sliced across at its thickest section.

Visitors will enter at mezzanine level looking straight into the B52 cockpit. The bomber flew on operations in the Vietnam War and has a 155 ft wing span. It is both the biggest exhibit and the centre piece of the display.

Mr Crosby said: "We are not just



The earliest exhibit: a biplane from the First World War

going to say: 'Here's a B52'. We are going to explain both its role in American air power and how that fits into the history of the twentieth century."

The aircraft went into service in 1954 and would still be on front line duty well into the next century, he said. "It's a very durable aircraft, nothing else has come close to that record."

The 4,500 ft Duxford runway is the shortest ever used for a B52 landing and the massive plane is the only one of its type on public display outside the US.

Former President Bush has given permission for a Grumman Avenger torpedo bomber to be painted in the colours of the version he flew in the South Pacific during the Second World War. It hangs from the ceiling near the U2.

But the exhibits are not without their ironies. On the ground below is an SA2 missile of the type used by the Russians to shoot down the spy plane flown by Francis Gary Powers which caused an international incident when he was caught spying over the Afghan Soviet border in May 1960.

Jesuit papers may hold key to Inka language

By NORMAN HAMMOND, ARCHAEOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

A MANUSCRIPT which could be a Rosetta Stone for Andean scholarship has been found in an Italian archive. Titled *A History and Rudiments of the Language of the Peruvians*, the manuscript, if genuine, could provide a key to the lost language of the Incas, the knotted cords used by the Incas for communication through their empire.

The document claims that "there is a general quipu used by everyone for numbering and daily communication... and another quipu for keeping all religious and caste secrets, known only to the Kings, the Virgins of the Sun, the Priests, and the Philosophers". Although the Spanish conquistadors destroyed as many as they could, some survived, and Father Blas Valera, a half-Inka Jesuit, was said to be able to read them easily.

Purportedly written early in the 17th century by two Italian Jesuits, Joan Antonio Cumis and Joan Anello Oliva, together with three pages of drawings by Valera, the nine folios of text and their later binding are in the family papers of the Neapolitan historian Clara Miccinesi. She published a short

book on them, *Quipu: The Talking Knots of the Mysterious Inka* in 1989, but it received little academic attention.

Now Professor Laura Laurencich Winick of the University of Bologna, convinced of its authenticity, has brought the manuscript to public attention again, but some noted Inka experts believe it to be a fake.

Professor Gary Urton of Colgate University notes that "most Peruvian documents are 'boring and uninformative', while this one 'wraps up the whole of Peruvian history in a dozen pages, a highly remarkable and therefore suspicious document in its completeness and its insistence on its own authenticity'".

The document claims that literary quipus were written with woven symbols and knotted cords: each symbol was a word key, for a limited range of terms that could be changed using particles and suffixes. The number of symbols below the symbol showed which syllable of the word was to be enunciated.

The name of the Inka deity Pachacamac would be divided Pa-

cha-ca-mac "pacha" also meant "time" in Quechua, and could be denoted by indicating with one and two knots the first two syllables in the key symbol for the god's name.

Cumis part of the manuscript includes a brief list of word keys and their quipu equivalents. The drawings said to be by Blas Valera purport to show how the Inka poem *Suma Nusta* — "Beautiful Princess" was written, and a quipu fragment accompanying the document is said to encode lines from the poem.

Equally controversial, however, are the historical claims the document makes. Oliva says that Francisco Pizarro, who conquered Peru by capturing the Inka emperor, was helped by the Incas to his coup by poisoning the Inka generals with wine laced with arsenic.

He also claims that Valera lived for nearly a quarter century beyond his supposed death in 1596, and that Valera's history of the Incas, published by the famous historian Guanaco Poma de Ayala under his own name, Valera is said to have included a cryptic reference to his

authorship in an illustration of the quipu in Poma's book: the quipu shown encodes the opening stanza of the *Suma Nusta*.

Inka specialists are divided about the authenticity of the document, apart from Professor Urton's scepticism. Professor Juan Ossio of the Catholic University in Lima points out that Valera would have lacked the knowledge of southern Peru shown in the text. Professor John Rowe of the University of California at Berkeley, followed by Inka scholars, believes that the manuscript is "not a fake, though its historical content is rather spurious: both Valera and Oliva played with the truth to serve their political goals".

Nevertheless, if it does offer a key to the quipu, it would be a "tremendous advance", Professor Urton said, but until technical tests have been done "we simply have to withhold judgement. If we admit a document written in recent decades into the history, we risk diverting ourselves from the serious study of Inka writing".

Source: *Archaeology* Vol. 49 No. 6, 50-56.

Latest wills

John George Knowles Kennedy, of London W11, left £4,080,288 net. He left £10,000 to the Cancer Research Campaign and £10,000 to the Royal Society for the Blind. His wife, Mrs. Mary Kennedy, died in 1994. He was 84.

John Ralph Banks, of Fulham, London SW6, left £1,416,757 net. He left his residuary estate to the Royal Agricultural Society of England. He was 72.

Ronald Leopold Desmet, of Farnham, Surrey, left £1,494,658 net. He left £5,000 each to Dr. Bernard's, Royal Tuckwell Memorial Hospital, and to the Royal Tuckwell Memorial Hospital. He was 72.

William Keith Robinson, of Harringay, North Yorkshire, left £559,642 net. He left £10,000 to the Charles and Johanna Foundation. He was 72.

Dorothy Evelyn Troughton, of Poulton Le Fylde, Lancashire, left £530,318 net. She left shares in her estate to the Poulton Le Fylde Community Centre. She was 84.

Robert Walker Cox, retired chartered accountant, of Boston, Nottingham, left £579,004 net. Audrey Muriel Gardner of Sunninghill, Berkshire, left £732,732 net.

Peacefully on December 29th, 1996, at the age of 84 years, after a long illness, Mrs. Mary Kennedy, of London W11, left £4,080,288 net. He left £10,000 to the Cancer Research Campaign and £10,000 to the Royal Society for the Blind. His wife, Mrs. Mary Kennedy, died in 1994. He was 84.

Peacefully on December 29th, 1996, at the age of 84 years, after a long illness, Mrs. Mary Kennedy, of London W11, left £4,080,288 net. He left £10,000 to the Cancer Research Campaign and £10,000 to the Royal Society for the Blind. His wife, Mrs. Mary Kennedy, died in 1994. He was 84.

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Forthcoming marriages

Mr G.P. Alliman and Miss R.D.M. Assin
The engagement is announced between Guy, younger son of Mr and Mrs. Ray Alliman, of Far Poles, Honeybourne, Worcestershire, and Rebecca, daughter of Sir Anthony and Lady Austin, of Stanbury Manor, Morwenstow, Cornwall.

Mr R.B. Chardon and Miss G.V.L. Kelly
The engagement is announced between Ralph, son of Mr R.B. Chardon, of Llandudno, Northumberland, and Georgina Cruddas, daughter of Sir David and Lady Kelly, of Stanton Farm, Northumberland.

Mr M.J.S. Cook and Miss V.C. Drake
The engagement is announced between Michael, younger son of Mrs A.M. Cook, of Victoria, London, and the late Mr J.R. Cook, of Oxon, Wirral, and Vanessa, daughter of Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs R.M.W. Drake, of Brambridge, Hampshire.

Mr T.H.M. Crabtree and Miss A.L. Hammond
The engagement is announced between Tom, only son of Major General and Mrs Derek Crabtree, of Shrivernham, Oxfordshire, and Anne, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs John Hammond, of Duxley Mill, Hampshire.

Mr E.E. Duncan and Miss J.S. McInnes
The engagement is announced between Euan Duncan, LLB, only son of Mr and Mrs Walter Duncan, of Forres, Moray, and Juliet, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Alastair McIntosh, of Gullane, East Lothian.

Mr A.J. Elliot and Miss F.S.R. Wilson
The engagement is announced between Alan, younger son of Mr and Mrs Michael Elliot, of Sheffield, Yorkshire, and Florence, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Nicholas Wilson, of Kenilworth, Warwickshire.

Mr J.C. Francis-Jones and Miss A.R. Molloy
The engagement is announced between James, elder son of Captain and Mrs Jake Francis-Jones, of Woodlawn House, Zeals, Wiltshire, and Anna-Rose, daughter of Mr and Mrs Anthony Molloy, of Crossogrove House, Thurles, Co. Tipperary, Ireland.

Mr C. Holst-Ross and Miss L.B. Frost
The engagement is announced between Carl, younger son of Dr. Roly and Mrs Jane Holst-Ross, of Harstad, Norway, and Emma, daughter of Mr and Mrs R.S. Frost, of Badsworth, Somerset.

Mr G.W. Keaton and Miss E.M. Earle
The engagement is announced between Geoffrey, son of Mr and Mrs Richard Keaton, of West Beeding, Dorset, and Elizabeth, daughter of Mr and Mrs Richard Earle, of Ryme-Intrusca, Dorset.

Mr J.W.A. Livesey and Miss J.R. Miller
The engagement is announced between John, son of Judge R.J.D. Livesey, QC, and Mrs Livesey, and Joanna, daughter of Mr and Mrs W. Miller, both of Southampton.

Mr D.N.J. Logue and Miss B.A. Stally
The engagement is announced between Declan, son of Mr and Mrs Seamus Logue, of Birmingham, and Boudicca, daughter of Mrs Ann Stally, of Alcester, Warwickshire.

Mr S.J. Maslen and Miss L.L. Cope
The engagement is announced between Steven, elder son of Mr and Mrs L.G. Maslen, of Iwer, South Buckinghamshire, and Jane, daughter of Group Captain and Mrs A.W. Cope, of Medmenham, Buckinghamshire.

Mr M.A. Mather-Lee and Miss P.A.J. Cook
The engagement is announced between Michael, son of Mrs M.A.D. Mather, of Broom, Devon, and son of the late Mr R.E. Peat, OBE, and Pandora, daughter of Dr and Mrs Michael Cook, of Exeter.

Mr J.E. Outwater and Miss P. Yee
The engagement is announced between James, son of Captain and Mrs J.E. Outwater, of Westbury, Wiltshire, and Polly, daughter of Mr and Mrs King C. Yee, of Woodside, New York.

Major J.H.I. Patrick, MVO, and Miss L.A. O'Connell
The engagement is announced between Major James Patrick, Irish Guards, son of Lieutenant Commander and Mrs John Patrick, of Bourne End, Buckinghamshire, and Lucia, eldest daughter of Surgeon Captain and Mrs Morgan O'Connell, of Wickham, Hampshire.

Mr C.J. Pattison and Miss K.V. Dadds
The engagement is announced between Charles, son of Mrs M.B. Potter, of Richmond, North Yorkshire, and the late Mr K.J. Pattison, and Katie, elder daughter of Squadron Leader and Mrs C.N. Dadds, of Grayshott, Surrey.

Mr S.A. Penney and Miss A.G. McLoughlin
The engagement is announced between Stuart, son of Mr and Mrs Anthony Penney, of Hastings, and Anna, daughter of Mr Richard McLoughlin, of Canbury, London, and Mrs Penny Foster, of Tunbridge Wells.

Mr J.C. Price and Miss J.R. Yates
The engagement is announced between Joseph, son of Mr Edmund Price and Mrs Elizabeth Price, of Tyla Glas, Caernarllion, and Jane, daughter of Dr and Mrs Ivan Yates, of Juggs Corner, Kingston, Sussex.

Mr B. Smees and Miss K. MacIntyre
The engagement is announced between Ben, younger son of Mr and Mrs Michael Smees, of Murbury, Devon, and Kate, daughter of Mr and Mrs Mark MacIntyre, of Birkham, West Sussex.

Mr G.J. von Burg III and Miss S.E. Sheelbourne
The engagement is announced between George, son of Mr and Mrs George von Burg, of Bettlach, Switzerland, and Hong Kong, and Sophia, Elizabeth, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs M.Q. Sheelbourne, of The Manor House, Soham, Ely, Cambridgeshire.

Mr S.J. Walker and Miss S.M. Benge
The engagement is announced between Simon, elder son of Mr Barry Walker, of Monkshead, Italy, and Mrs Hazel Walker, of Cholesbury Common, Buckinghamshire, and Sophie, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs John Benge, of Farnham Royal, Buckinghamshire.

Mr H.D. Walkshaw and Miss J.A. Haves
The engagement is announced between Hugo, son of Mr Colin Walkshaw, of Compton, Surrey, and Mrs Pierre Rostand, of Beaulieu, Hampshire, and Julia, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Robert Haves, of Chilton, Oxfordshire.

Mr A.E. Collinson and Miss E. Richards
The marriage took place yesterday at St Mary's, Bowdick, Cornwall. The bride, who was given in marriage by her father, was attended by Poppy Henrietta Collinson and Mrs Douglas Davies. Mr Thomas Andrew Hoyle was best man.

Mr A.M. Briggs and Miss A.H. Foster
The marriage took place on Saturday, December 28, in St Paul's Cathedral, of Mr Anthony Briggs, younger son of the late Mr Kenneth Briggs, and of Mrs Briggs, of Sunderland, and Miss Alice Foster, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Peter Foster, of London. The Rev John Lees officiated.

The bride, who was given in marriage by her father, was attended by Louise and Thomas Briggs. Mr Paul Burfoot and Mr Paul Briggs were best men. A reception was held at Vic Naylors, Clerkenwell, and the honeymoon will be spent in San Francisco and Hawaii.

Mr C.W. Brown and Miss R.C. Jackson
The marriage took place on December 31, at St Patrick's Church, Southwark, Surrey, and Mr and Mrs William Brown, of Emsay, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Richard Jackson.

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

I shall appoint shepherds who will tend my sheep, so that never again will they have fear or dismay or punishment. Jeremiah 23: 4

BIRTHS

BANKS - On December 28th 1996, to Simon and Joanna, a second son, Jack Samuel.

DEVLIN - On 7th December 1996, to Nicola and Christopher, a son, Arthur.

EDWARDS - On December 21st, to Carol (nee Brown) and Gareth, a daughter, Imogen Alexandra.

GREY - On 25th December 1996, to Jane (nee McNeill) and John, a son, Benjamin John William.

HILSON - On December 19th, to Anna (nee Stevens) and Christopher, a son, Daniel Joseph.

SHAW - On 22nd December 1996, to Richard and Julia, a son, Charles Vere Jan.

Special thanks to the Glasgow Community Midwives and the staff at St Thomas' Hospital.

DEATHS

BIRD - Helen Irene, much loved daughter of Daisy and David, and sister of Richard, died on 26th December aged 49. Buried at St Mary's, London on 31st January 1997. Family flowers welcomed. Burial at St Mary's, London on 31st January 1997. Family flowers welcomed. Burial at St Mary's, London on 31st January 1997. Family flowers welcomed.

KEAN - Suddenly at 8:30 am on 26th December 1996, after a long illness, at his home, 10, St. John's Road, London N1, aged 74. Buried at St. John's, London on 29th December 1996. Family flowers welcomed.

WALKER - On 28th December 1996, to Simon and Joanna, a second son, Jack Samuel.

BIRTHS

MARTIN CUSONS - On 27th December 1996, to John and Mary, a son, William.

PATULLO - On 23rd December 1996, to Susan and David, a son, James.

PEGUM - On Christmas Morning, to Valerie (nee Smith) and David, a daughter, Sophie Emily.

WALKER - On 28th December 1996, to Simon and Joanna, a second son, Jack Samuel.

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DEATHS

HAWKES - Josephine (nee Hobbs), widow of Mr L.S. Hawkes, peacefully at home Sunday 27th December.

CHATHAM - Chaud, aged 80 years, peacefully at 27th December 1996. Buried at St. John's, London on 31st January 1997. Family flowers welcomed.

JACKSON - Errol, husband of Jeanette, Father of Andrew and Wendy, peacefully at home Sunday 27th December 1996. Buried at St. John's, London on 31st January 1997. Family flowers welcomed.

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BIRTHS

McDONNELL - David Charles, aged 80 years, peacefully at home Sunday 27th December 1996. Buried at St. John's, London on 31st January 1997. Family flowers welcomed.

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McDONNELL -

**PROFESSOR S.
HERBERT FRANKEL**

The police appealed against the decision of the Bench, and on December 1 the Division Bench allowed the appeal, and sent the case to the Magistrates with a direction to hear and determine it according to the law.

Mr. Gratton Pryor appeared for the prosecution, Mr. Eustace Fulton defended.

Mr. Woolfe, before calling Mrs. Woolfe to the witness, asked the Bench to consider the evidence in spite of what had been said elsewhere.

"Mrs. Woolfe had not made a shilling apart from what Mr. Woolfe might have been careless and imprudent."

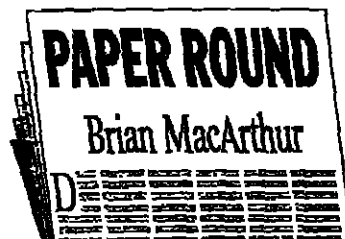
Mrs. Woolfe read a statement in which she said she had taken River Cottage, Free Dintons, for the use of a public association, and

acted as area secretary, which necessitated her keeping late hours. Later on she acquired a barn near home to her house, which was afterwards made into a studio for singing, and her own organised banding tournaments for village lads. In 1929 two members of St. John's College asked permission to use the room for dance band practice. Afterwards, she agreed to run three dances, the band taking a percentage of profits. Sunday tea dances were started and went well attended, but only small profits were made by her. She was never only a suspicion of immoral behaviour. There was only one occasion on which she saw anything wrong and that was when a man had a girl on his knee. He never came again, as they were closing the place owing to losses.

Mr. Pryor drew the attention of the Bench to the presence in court of the Senior Proctor, Mr. E. J. O'Connell, of Tralee, who desired to refuse the summons of Mrs. Worsley to appear, that any underpayment giving evidence on her behalf would be sent down. That was quite untrue, and no effort to that effect had been issued by the proctorial body.

The Bench retired, and on their return the CHAIRMAN said that they were of opinion that Mr. O'Connell had no defence to offer, and he must displace the facts of the case, and that he had no hesitation in obeying the order of the Divisional Court. The full fine of £100 would be inflicted, as they looked upon it as a deliberate inveigling of young men and young women into immoral courses.

What sells newspapers?



The main story on the front page of the *Daily Mail* yesterday was devoted to the knighthood bestowed on Paul McCartney. Alongside that was a human interest story about a British woman in peril abroad: a photograph of Deborah Parry, one of the two nurses charged with murder in Saudi Arabia.

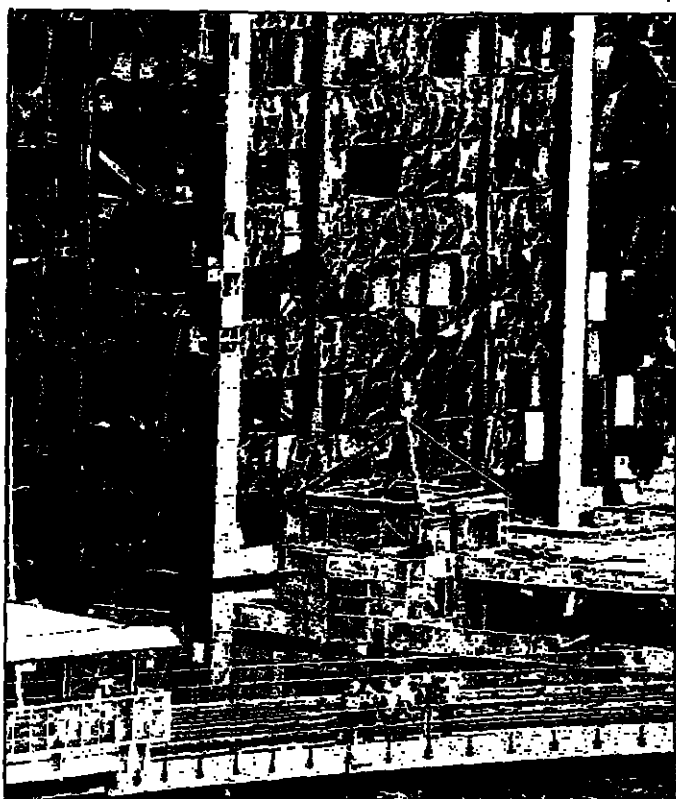
My bet, however, is that it was neither of these stories which was really moving the *Daily Mail* off the newspaper's racks. That honour belonged to Jonathan Cainer, who is not a journalist but an astrologist. All this week the *Mail* is serialising the predictions for 1997 that Cainer gleans from his study of the stars and planets, and promoting the series across the top of the front page.

According to Paper Round's study of what sold national newspapers in 1996, it is only rarely that news stories achieve the extra sales boosts that all editors strive so hard to gain. What adds sales most often are promotions. That is why horoscopes are one of the most popular tactics used by newspaper marketers, especially on the tabloids.

When the *Daily Mail* serialised Jonathan Cainer's horoscopes last year, it achieved its third highest sales boost of the year, an extra 120,000 copies, and the *Daily Express* added 77,000 with its "Horoscopes 96" series. The *Mail* on Sunday added 192,000, its highest surge of the year, when it published a "new year" set of horoscopes — a real achievement — from the late Patric Walker. So did the *Sunday Mirror* with Russell Grant. The fabled *Mystic Meg* also works wonders for the *News of the World*.

Sex, health and money always boost sales. The *Sunday Times* got its highest increase of 1996 with its annual survey of Britain's richest men and women, and the *Sun* its second highest when it launched its Syndicates Lottery card. Marks & Spencer vouchers did well for the *Daily Express* as did a two-for-one British Midland ticket offer, a two-for-one BA offer in the *Mail* on Sunday and the *Sun*'s £9.50 short-break holidays in Britain.

With its combination of travel and saving money, the Eurostar promo-



Big stories such as Canary Wharf and Dunblane cannot match promotions and horoscopes in the hunt for sales



tion in the *Times* and the *Sunday Times* was certainly the best broadsheet promotion of the year, adding more than 150,000 to sales of both papers over four weeks and pushing both to all-time records.

Any promotion related to healthy living is also a winner. A slimming promotion with Vernon Coleman won *The People* its highest sale of the year and a May bikini diet in the *News of the World* added 132,000. For the *Daily Mail*, a January diet wallchart achieved the biggest boost of the year of 177,000 and the *Sunday Times* "Change Your Life" added 113,000.

Sex, soaps, sport, TV and the royals are the other surefire winners. Study the seven news stories that did best for *The Sun* and four are about Diana, Princess of Wales or the Duchess of York (aka Fergie); another was England's Euro '96 victory over Holland, as it was for the *Daily Mirror*. The *Sun* got its biggest boost of all from the Christmas TV listings, another big success for the *Mirror*.

Study the *Daily Mirror*'s top ten and three are based on football, two on Gazza, two on Prince Charles or Princess Diana and two on Dunblane. A sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll special took the *Independent* on

Sunday to its highest sale of the year. Yet royal stories work in all newspaper markets. A special on the Queen did well for *The Mail* on Sunday, adding 108,000, and the serialisation of Sarah Bradford's biography of the Queen added more than 200,000 for *The Times*, its highest boost of the year.

More modest promotions also work for the broadsheets. The most successful for *The Guardian* was a mini Halliwell film guide, which added 30,000, and serialisation of a Robert Maxwell biography, which put on about 20,000. For *The Independent*, its most successful tactic was its £3 video offer, which added sales by 39,000, and it won an extra 30,000 readers a day from its publication of university vacancies.

Dunblane, two IRA bombs, Euro '96, the Budget, Princess Diana's divorce — news does sell newspapers, as *The Independent* found out when the IRA bomb went off near its Canary Wharf headquarters and its office was evacuated. The journalists who remained produced their best selling newspaper of the year as did those who did the Sunday paper.

Yet the best marketing tactic of all is the simplest. Apart from the *Daily Mail*, the newspapers that have reduced their prices have shown the best sales rises during 1996.

WINNING SALES

The stories and promotions that lifted sales	Extra sales '96
<i>Daily Mirror</i> Christmas TV listings	288,000/12
<i>The Sun</i> Sarah Bradford/The Queen	174,000/7
<i>The Sun</i> Diet	177,000/3
<i>Daily Mail</i> Diet	177,000/7
<i>The Express</i> Horoscopes 1996	126,000/6
<i>The Times</i> Sarah Bradford/The Queen	205,000/28
<i>The Guardian</i> Halliwell film guide	30,000/7
<i>The Independent</i> Robert Maxwell serial	20,000/5
<i>NoW</i> Christmas TV listings	182,000/4
<i>The People</i> Slimming/Coleman	125,000/5
<i>Sunday Mirror</i> Russell Grant horoscope	100,000/4
<i>Mail on Sunday</i> Patric Walker	192,000/4
<i>Sunday Times</i> The Queen	108,000/5
<i>The Observer</i> Weight stuff	40,000/9
<i>Isis</i> Half price/free Penguin	40,000/9
<i>Isis</i> Canary Wharf bomb	30,000/10
<i>Isis</i> Sex, drugs, rock	30,000/10

THE SUN TOP TEN

Extra sales	Month
1. Christmas TV listings	November
2. Syndicates Lottery Card	January
3. Super TV Guide	October
4. IRA bomb London	February
5. Football Football mag	August
6. Coronation St card	March
7. Dunblane	January
8. £9.50 holidays	October
9. Diana video hoax	January
10. England beat Holland	June

The 1997 wish list for all licence fee payers

All I want for the new year is...

WITH 30,000 students now enrolled in British degree courses in media studies, and with hundreds of digital satellite channels, plus the new Channel 5 on their way, it is hard to know what else to wish for in 1997. But I will try.

□ An electronic guide to BBC management. Has Alan Yentob been relegated to Channel 1639?

□ Magazines that do not spew glossy leaflets for cut-price power tools, film prints, fitted kitchens and home insurance all over your carpet. I know, I know, these fillers keep the cover price down. I hate them.

□ Radio 4's *Thought for the Day* to be moved to 10am to inspire the farmers.

□ Politicians to realise that the *Today* programme on the aforesaid radio network is agenda-setting only for those stuck in chauffeur-driven cars between 7 o'clock and 8.45 on weekday mornings. Everybody else seriously interested in public affairs has his or her head stuck in newspapers at that time of day.

□ An end to newspaper space for judges who tell psychopaths. "You are a monster whose actions are abhorrent to all right-thinking people", thereby suggesting that all right-thinking people have contemplated the rape of a nonagenarian in a graveyard but, upon reflection, rejected it.

□ A quiz at the end of the BBC's *Horizon* and other well meaning science television programmes to see if even one fact has been transferred to the mind of the audience. Which way does the water run between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea? Right answers get £10 off their licence fee.

□ Television licence fee-dodgers (who are — more good news from 1996 — no longer to be sent to jail) to be sentenced to 40 weeks of viewing only daytime television.

□ A V-chip to blot out *Crimewatch*, the most frightening programme on TV.

□ Jeremy Paxman to present *Question Time*.

□ The new Chinese rulers of Hong Kong to announce on July 1 that they have embraced Western notions of a free press. Western journalists can thereupon renew their leases on their elegant high-rise flats, confident of continuing to work uncensored as before.

□ A quiet agreement to shelve the Millennium Exhibition as a bad idea and to give the £700 million to schools instead. Or to hospitals. Or repairing the sewers. Or anything.

□ A rest cure for Chris Evans.

□ Maternity leave for Madonna.

□ Television weather forecasters to face the map, rather than the audience, saving us those embarrassing mimes in which their left hand swoops over the Isles of Scilly when they are talking about the Scottish Highlands.

□ An award for *Neighbours*, the sunny soap.

□ A television set you can hang on the wall (as promised by futurologists for the past 20 years).

□ A recognition that Ireland is a European partner like any other and therefore can tolerate British politicians referring to its Prime Minister in English. Otherwise, fair's fair. If we must endure *Taoiseach* for John Bruton, why not *Bundeskanzler* for Helmut Kohl and *Premier Ministre* for Alain Juppé?

□ A recognition that Ireland is a country that knows how to treat a film industry.

□ The disappearance of all astrology columns from newspapers and magazines. In their place could go recommended ripostes for those who coyly side up to ask you, "What's your sign?" To this, the late Richard Burton, I'm told, used to snap back: "Do Not Disturb".

□ All drama-documentaries to be true. Accuracy need not be boring. It just takes longer.

□ The return of the place-name apostrophe, as in King's Cross and Gray's Inn Road. Check saints' names in the telephone directory if you don't think there's a problem.

□ The return of the multi-coloured Channel 4 logo.

□ The return of *The Larry Sanders Show*, the sassiest American import since *The Simpsons*, which together prove that, despite the new waves of grotesque hypocrisy and political correctness, American irony is not dead.

□ *The Simpsons* to run five nights a week.

□ A lifetime appointment for Don Cruickshank, head of the cable, satellite and telephone watchdog, Ofcom. If security of tenure gives judges courage and authority, why should it not do the same for an anti-monopoly regulator?

□ Calvin Klein to undergo counselling to cure bizarre fantasies of what kind of poster sells jeans and perfume to people waiting at bus stops.

□ ITV to move the ITN News at Ten to whatever time it likes, but to give up that commercial break which so blantly divides the hard news from the soft.

□ The Queen, in her next Christmas broadcast, to remind the nation that love means never having to say you're sorry.

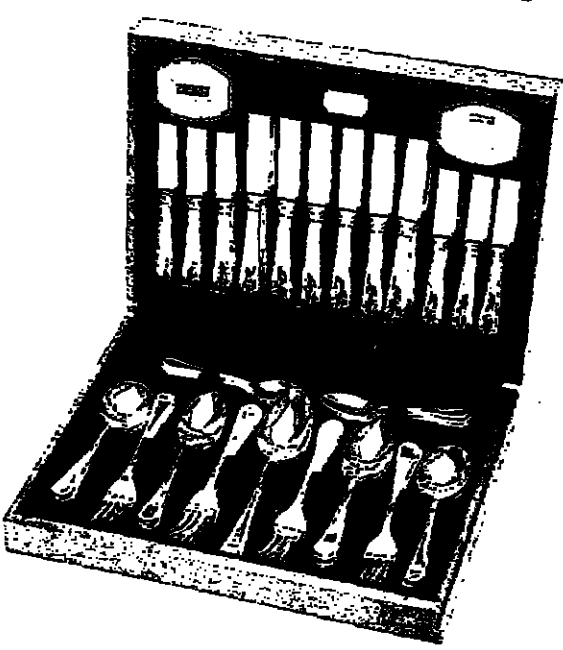
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Berkeley

QUALITY TO APPRECIATE

Show girls who star in luxury locales

Rachel Kelly on the ladies who launch country houses for leading estate agents

What do girls in pearls do when they grow up? Many become "show girls", the secret hidden asset of every country estate agent. These are ladies who launch country houses. Well-connected, horse-riding, Jaeger-skirted and part of the county set, they are deployed by the likes of Knight Frank to show potential buyers around.

Savills, Strutt & Parker and Knight Frank all employ between 25 and 30 show girls around the country. Only three of what Knight Frank prefers to term its "showover staff" are men.

They are definitely not estate agents and are more at home in the tack room than the office. The 1993 Property Mis-descriptions Act means that the actual selling process is carefully regulated and can be handled only by agents; it is for the show girls to step in when an agent cannot take a client around the house. Since the Act, the women are careful about making any dubious claims about the houses that the agent cannot prove and tricky questions are referred back to the office.

Owners love it and so do the buyers

Most of this staff are in their forties and fifties, married with grown-up children. Their jobs are normally obtained through contacts in a world where the smart estate agents dine with those whose houses they may soon market. Most adore their work and love nothing more than nosing around other people's houses—possibly that of their neighbour who has run off with the local square. The knowledge of who is selling makes them hot property at local dinner parties.

Colin Hughes, of Knight Frank in Guildford, says: "Their enthusiasm is infectious to the buyers. Showover staff do their job for the love of it and can therefore devote

more time to it. That is why owners love it and why buyers do, too."

Agents also love the strategy. As the housing market improves, time has become the key and viewing women are coming into their own, especially with big houses, which take time to show. Mr Hughes says: "The practice is most prevalent in houses priced mostly in excess of a quarter of a million pounds."

Tim Daney of Strutt & Parker's Ipswich office says: "Showover staff are very agreeable people who humanise the process of house-hunting. They live in the area and talk in the local terms."

Crucially, they report back to the agent on the suitability of house and purchaser.

For the past four years, Jeanne Goodfellow has shown houses for Strutt & Parker around the Suffolk coast. Most of her customers are wealthy people buying second properties. She lived locally as a child and always

retained ties with the area through family and a holiday home in Thorpeness. She has shown houses since her retirement from her job as an interior design consultant.

"You have to like people," she says. "People are understandably quite emotional when buying houses, so the process can be difficult. As the wife of a former serviceman, I've moved house goodness knows how many times. So I know the sort of stresses that people face."

Mrs Goodfellow believes that a human face and a love for the property divorced from the imperative to sell help to ease friction. Nor does she deny that common social contacts and knowing the local context sometimes help to sell a property.

The going rate is £4 an hour, plus mileage. "One would have to work full-time to make



Fay Cox, at 51, a veteran show girl. The job offers flexibility although, she says, "every day is different: there is never a dull moment"

much money," Mrs Goodfellow says, "and even then my work is highly seasonal."

Show girls are busiest in spring and autumn, traditionally the selling seasons.

The business has become more professional since the recession. Tommy de Malet Morgan of the Savills office in Surrey says: "Back in the 1980s, we got feedback that showover women were over the top and sometimes a real turn-off; they would leap out at you. Business societies ran estate agents on a very hard-sell basis. But these days, they not only have a good business acumen, they adore the houses."

Graham Waterton, a partner of Strutt & Parker in

Salisbury, says: "A nice, charming viewing lady is much less intimidating than a 6ft 5in male estate agent like me."

A harder edge is, however, becoming de rigueur. Sheila McDaniel was originally employed by Savills as a viewing woman. But the inevitable need for professionalism means that she is now employed as area sales manager for Harleyford. She says: "The idea is to make buyers relax and enjoy their visit as if they were having a day out. But underneath, there has to

be strong professionalism because nobody buys from a showgirl who does not know her product."

Some agents eschew the practice. Ian Homersham, the joint chairman of John D. Wood, says that his firm does not employ showover staff because he considers the relationship with the purchaser too important to delegate.

"Agents should know about the house and know about the street and the locality," he explains. "You cannot expect some smart woman to have the in-depth knowledge

of experienced agents."

Nor is it all fun. Mrs Goodfellow says she hates the job when people do not turn up. She has travelled up to 30 miles, only to find that the viewer failed to arrive. Others complain about cold houses, dirty shoes and people who fiddle with objects.

Buyers can get angry. Ms McDaniel says: "I was the meat in the sandwich. If a buyer lost out, I would bear the brunt of the anger."

Then there is the security. Only a few years ago, Suzy Lamplugh was sent by a London agent to show a property to a Mr Kipper. She has not been seen since. Knight Frank insists on maintaining contact via mobile telephones,

Women can find out more details

FAY'S WAY

Ten years of tramping big houses

FAY COX, 51, is a veteran show girl and the kind of woman who probably has some good jewellery in the bank. She has shown for the Knight Franks office in Guildford for ten years. Though she had done a little work for a local estate agent, she did not want to work as one, preferring to be on the road.

"Every day is different," she says. "There is never a dull moment." The work allows her the flexibility to spend time with her husband, an insurance broker, and her children. Both her boys are at university and her daughter hopes to follow.

Showing also allows her to continue with secretarial jobs for the Hospital for the Blessed Trinity in Guildford and another local charity. "When I have viewings during the day," she says, "I can do these jobs in the evening."

Mrs Cox is proud that she gets on with sellers and buyers alike, adding: "They treat me as their contact and their confidence."

She demonstrates the growing professionalism of viewing women by being aware that sellers judge the performance of the firm by reference to the competence of the showover staff.

Mrs Cox says: "An important aspect of the job satisfaction for me is the challenge of selling a house by establishing and prioritising the needs of the buyer."

Despite her other jobs, such is her affinity with this one that she drives a Golf GTI in Knight Frank colours with a KFR numberplate.

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NEWS

Cold shows no sign of relenting

Britain slithered into the new year today in the grip of a freeze which has left many roads impassable, claimed several lives and devastated sporting fixtures. Forecasters expect the cold snap to continue into the weekend.

Temperatures are not expected to rise above a maximum of 0C (32F) today. Most areas will be considerably colder with the wind-chill factor adding to the bleak outlook. A London Weather Centre spokeswoman said: "We are likely to see it very cold with some snow rather than huge falls"..... Page 1

Anger of Fred West film

Anger greeted the plans of a leading production company to make a film of the life of Frederick West. Peter Harris, the Official Solicitor, said that he has entered into an option contract with the Portman Entertainment Group..... Page 1

Philatelic theft

Harold Wilson, hounded by conspiracies, was betrayed by one of his staff "possibly from the garden class" who stole illegal Rhodesian stamps. Government papers show..... Pages 1, 5

Deng 'seriously ill'

A Hong Kong newspaper with close ties to the People's Liberation Army reported that China's senior leader, Deng Xiaoping, was seriously ill..... Pages 1, 9

Cheer for sceptics

The Bank of England governor has heartened Tory Euro-sceptics by emphasising the need for "rigorous" checks to ensure that European Union countries do not fudge the conditions for entering a single currency..... Page 2

Dirty election

Fresh evidence that this year's election campaign will be the dirtiest on record emerged as Labour pledged to puncture John Major's "nice guy" image..... Page 3

Nurses trial

Lawyers acting for the two British nurses accused of murdering a colleague in Saudi Arabia insisted that they would help them to receive a fair trial..... Page 3

Prince's plan

The Prince of Wales discloses a plan to breathe life into the nation's largest and most neglected listed buildings by turning them into low-cost housing..... Page 4

Frinton for the Continent

The long forgotten music hall artist Freddie Frinton has become a cult hero in Germany. Millions of television viewers do not believe their New Year's Eve celebrations are complete without switching on to see Frinton perform in *Dinner For One*, an obscure comedy routine filmed more than three decades ago in English and in black and white..... Page 3

Nightingale in ward

The Radio 1 disc jockey Annie Nightingale returned to Britain after being mugged in Cuba on Christmas Eve. She was taken to hospital for a check..... Page 4

Boy's damages

A boy who had to have lifesaving surgery after becoming infected with the "flesh-eating bug" has won £62,100 damages from a medical practice and the doctor who wrongly diagnosed his condition..... Page 4

Palestine haggle

After agreeing on terms for its withdrawal from most of Hebron, Israel continued to haggle with the PLO over prisoner releases..... Page 6

Saddam's fears

President Saddam Hussein of Iraq is now so afraid there are traitors within his family that he is relying increasingly on non-relatives to be his closest political advisers..... Page 6

Iran election cash

The CIA was reported to have evidence that Iran secretly delivered at least half a million dollars in cash to the President of Bosnia before the election..... Page 8

Dutch headache

A king-size headache settled on the Dutch Government today. The six-month ailment is called the presidency of the European Union..... Page 8



Henry Cano, a kitchen artist, with his ice sculpture made from 1,600 gallons of water, outside the Dorchester Hotel, London, yesterday

BUSINESS

Weather damage: The sustained cold snap in Europe pushed oil prices higher and prompted warnings from insurers that the nationwide freeze could soon lead to increases in both household and motor premiums..... Page 40

House prices: The market is set for a general and sustainable strengthening this year, says the British Bankers' Association..... Page 40

Jobs: Britain's engineering industry is likely to lose up to 400,000 jobs through technological and product change..... Page 40

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index rose 2.8 to 4118.5. Sterling's trade-weighted index rose from 95.6 to 96.1 after a rise from \$1.6910 to \$1.7120 and from DM2.6325 to DM2.6373..... Page 36

Cricket: Graham Thorpe, who has a better limited-overs record than England's other top batsmen, has been omitted from the side for the second one-day international against Zimbabwe..... Page 21

Football: After almost a decade John Barnes remains the organiser and guide of the leaders. Liverpool, as the race continues towards the destiny of the 1997 FA Cup Premiership..... Page 22

Weather: Freezing conditions have made deep inroads into today's sports programme, with more than 30 football matches postponed in England and Scotland..... Page 21

Rugby league: Joe Lydon has left Wigan after 11 years of significant input as player, assistant coach and manager..... Page 30

Impressive debut: Jessica Lange makes her West End debut in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and scores a triumph in the part of Blanche DuBois..... Page 12

Thumbs down: Michael McArdle's *Yule Better Change*, a musical version of Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, struggles to satisfy its audience..... Page 12

Seasonal steps: The Royal Ballet fields two contrasting casts in its Christmas production of Ashton's *Cinderella*..... Page 12

Spaced out: In our final part of the series *If These Walls Could Speak*, Nigel Hawkes visits Cape Canaveral in Florida..... Page 13

Guide: Family events, theatres and cinemas..... Page 13

IN THE TIMES

FILMS

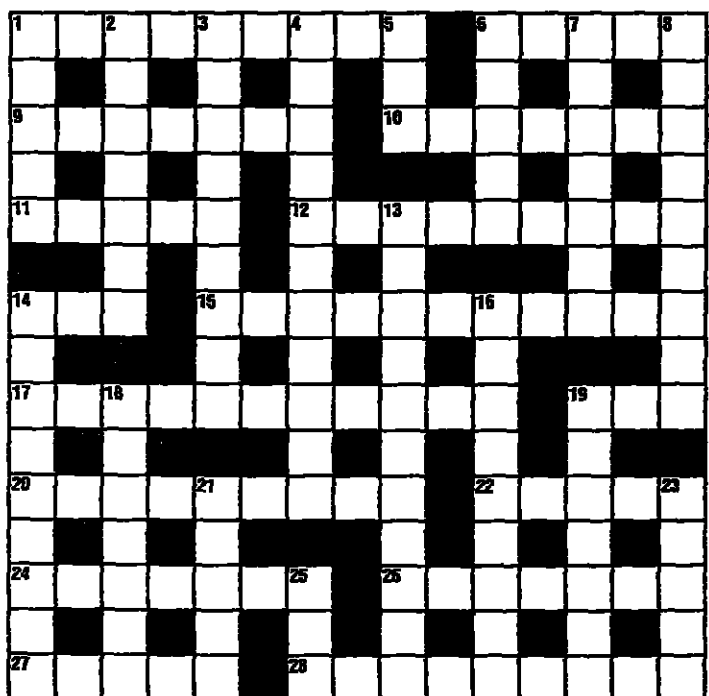
Geoff Brown reviews *Sleepers*, with its all-star male cast, including Robert De Niro, right, and Jason Patric

BOOKS

John Gribbin on parallel universes, Roger Boyes on the Vatican

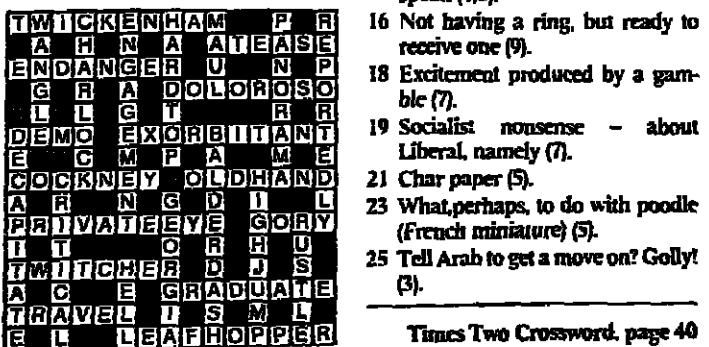


THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,365



- ACROSS**
- Initial measure taken to mark Hogmanay (5-4).
 - Rock's penetrated by end of axe, and cracks (5).
 - With this instrument, Mary reveals mysterious craft (7).
 - Englishman brings in hard worker - that's the spirit! (7).
 - Pick up a novel (5).
 - Troubled lad at once relying on relations (9).
 - A lot of money put in pocket (3).
 - 1997, for example (5,6).
 - Campaigner getting cross on behalf of about half the population (11).
 - Sound like hounds, or one of the horses (3).
 - Less constrained by the right, as this paper used to be (9).
 - Halfheartedly rush for dance (5).
 - Love that's intangible? (7).
- DOWN**
- Concentrate foolishly on closing unsuccessful schools initially (5).
 - Disqualify lure, possibly (4,3).
 - Try to get free passes in this form of assessment (4,5).
 - Musical performer seen in shop, erasing errors (5,6).
 - Cap for a spinner (3).
 - Alice's intended to provide protection (5).
 - Make city save up for washing facility (4,3).
 - Lily's arm I treated - poor Mary is ill, likewise (9).
 - Voices seeing what prince's position might have been (11).
 - In which we make seaway, so to speak (4,5).
 - Not having a ring, but ready to receive one (9).
 - Excitement produced by a gambler (7).
 - Socialist nonsense - about Liberal, namely (7).
 - Char paper (5).
 - What, perhaps, to do with poodle (French miniature) (5).
 - Tell Arab to get a move on? Golly! (3).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,364



Times Two Crossword, page 40

RAINFOREST

Latest Road and Weather conditions
UK Weather - All regions 0336 444 910
UK Roads - All regions 0336 401 410
A16 0336 401 746
A16 and Link Roads 0336 401 747
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Motorway to Heathrow & Gatwick airports 0336 407 505

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Wales 416 335 N. Ireland 416 341
Midland 416 336 London 416 342
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N. East 416 339 Weather pictures 416 397
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new and used car reports from the AA menu of 195 cars 0336 416 399
you may have to let us poll receive menu

HIGHEST & LOWEST
Yesterday's highest daily temp. South coast, Weymouth 4C (39F), lowest daily temp. Weymouth, Dorset 0C (32F).
January 0.1st. Highest sunrise, 7.15a. First frost, 6.15a.

AA Development Ltd.
British Road Traffic Federation (RTA) Ltd.
Calls are charged at 8p per minute plus 1p per minute for the first 30 seconds.
50p per minute at all other times.

General: England and Wales will have another cold day. Eastern areas will be rather cloudy with snow showers at times. These will be most frequent over northeast England, parts of East Anglia and near Channel coasts. The West should be mainly dry with sunny periods and just the odd snow shower.

Scotland and Northern Ireland will be mainly dry at first, apart from snow showers in southeast Scotland. During the day, cloud and wintry showers will extend south across northern Scotland. It will be cold in most places.

London, E Anglia, E Midlands, Channel Isles, and SE, E, SW, NE, Central S and Central N England: bright or sunny intervals, a few snow showers. Wind northeast, fresh to strong, moderating later. Max 10C (50F).

W Midlands, S Wales, N Wales, NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man: mainly dry, dry at first, becoming mainly dry later. Wind northeast, turning north, moderate. Max 10C (50F).

Aberdeen, Central Highlands, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Argyll, NW Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: mainly dry at first, but becoming increasingly cloudy from the north, with more frequent wintry showers. Wind northeast, turning north, light to moderate. Max 4C (39F).

SW Scotland, Glasgow, N Ireland: mainly dry with bright or sunny spells. Wind northeast, light to moderate. Max 2C (36F).

Outlook for tomorrow and Friday: rain and snow in North, moving South and dying out. Staying cold.

AROUND THE COUNTRY

24 hrs to 5 pm, b-bright; c-cloud; d-droizzle; d-dust storm; d-dust; f-fog; g-gale; h-hail; r-rain; s-snow; sh-shower; st-storm; t-thunder; w-wind; x-x-ray; y-yellow; z-zigzag; 1-1st; 2-2nd; 3-3rd; 4-4th; 5-5th; 6-6th; 7-7th; 8-8th; 9-9th; 10-10th; 11-11th; 12-12th; 13-13th; 14-14th; 15-15th; 16-16th; 17-17th; 18-18th; 19-19th; 20-20th; 21-21st; 22-22nd; 23-23rd; 24-24th; 25-25th; 26-26th; 27-27th; 28-28th; 29-29th; 30-30th; 31-31st; 32-32nd; 33-33rd; 34-34th; 35-35th; 36-36th; 37-37th; 38-38th; 39-39th; 40-40th; 41-41st; 42-42nd; 43-43rd; 44-44th; 45-45th; 46-46th; 47-47th; 48-48th; 49-49th; 50-50th; 51-51st; 52-52nd; 53-53rd; 54-54th; 55-55th; 56-56th; 57-57th; 58-58th; 59-59th; 60-60th; 61-61st; 62-62nd; 63-63rd; 64-64th; 65-65th; 66-66th; 67-67th; 68-68th; 69-69th; 70-70th; 71-71st; 72-72nd; 73-73rd; 74-74th; 75-75th; 76-76th; 77-77th; 78-78th; 79-79th; 80-80th; 81-81st; 82-82nd; 83-83rd; 84-84th; 85-85th; 86-86th; 87-87th; 88-88th; 89-89th; 90-90th; 91-91st; 92-92nd; 93-93rd; 94-94th; 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642-642nd; 643-643rd; 644-644th; 645-645th; 646-646th; 647-647th; 648-648th; 649-649th; 650-650th; 651-651st; 652-652nd; 653-653rd; 654-654th; 655-655th; 656-656th; 657-657th; 658-658th; 65

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TODAY



GOLF

Tiger remains
on course to
burn brighter
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RUGBY UNION

McGeechan's plan
to avoid leading
Lions to slaughter
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BUSINESS

The last laugh
for software
millionaires
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TELEVISION
AND
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WEDNESDAY JANUARY 1 1997

Surrey batsman sacrificed as Atherton pursues all-round option

England drop Thorpe from one-day side

FROM SIMON WILLES IN HARARE

IF Michael Atherton had considered dropping himself from the England side today, he was not letting on yesterday. The captain dead-batted the suggestion that he might have been the batsman left out for the second one-day international against Zimbabwe at Harare Sports Club, which England must not lose if they are to avoid being beaten in the three-match series.

Instead, Graham Thorpe, whose record in limited-overs cricket is better than those of Atherton, Stewart, Hussain and Crawley, will be omitted so that England can play two all-rounders, Irani and White, and give themselves the security of six bowlers among whom to divide 50 overs. Caddick and Tufnell are also being left on the sidelines.

The idea of a team that is trailing 1-0 dropping its best batsman, albeit one who has struggled recently, is certainly a novel one and will doubtless encourage the Zimbabweans to believe that England have not followed their advice and abandoned their "superiority complex".

It may also harden the resolve of Zimbabwe to go on and win a series of limited-overs internationals for the first time. Until now, Zimbabwe's best result is a 1-1 draw with Pakistan — the other match was tied — at home two years ago.

Though England will say that the team named for today is the one that gives them the best chance of levelling the series, it is hard to believe that, if Atherton were not captain, he would still be in the side.

Ideologically, he has little sympathy for the limited-overs format (only on Monday he referred to the Zimbabwe leg of England's winter tour as being over, even though two one-day games remained to be played), is less adept than the likes of Thorpe at working the

ball around in tight situations, and is in no sort of form. Since playing the decisive innings against South Africa in Bloemfontein a year ago, Atherton has passed 30 only twice in 17 one-day matches for England (only six of which they won) and, since arriving in Zimbabwe five weeks ago, he has accumulated only 153 runs in 11 innings.

In the first one-day international, in Bulawayo two weeks ago, Atherton used up 77 balls scoring 23 runs and, finding it impossible to get out of first gear, was dismissed attempting to hit Grant-Flower, the part-time spinner, over the top. Although several of his teammates were no less culpable, Atherton's performance

has been given an injection in his lumbar region to ease the pain, he has worked hard in the nets with David Lloyd, John Emburey and Ian Botham, not only to acquire the stamina to bowl long spells but also to modify his action to put less strain on his back and make the ball carry through.

Irani has never been a great swinger of the ball; his potential strength is to hit the pitch hard and move the ball away from the bat. The real test of his progress will come today and in the third match in the series on the same ground on Friday.

He can satisfy the England management that he still has a role to play, he could yet remain with the team until the end of the New Zealand leg of the tour, something that looked unlikely two weeks ago.

However, with White having been told that he will remain with the party for the duration, and Cork joining the side next week, England could find themselves with more players than they are able to keep occupied.

That situation already applies to Jack Russell, who has played only two days of cricket since coming here, the most recent of them three weeks ago, and with Stewart in such fine form there is little prospect of him making anything but the occasional appearance between now and the end of the tour, on March 4.

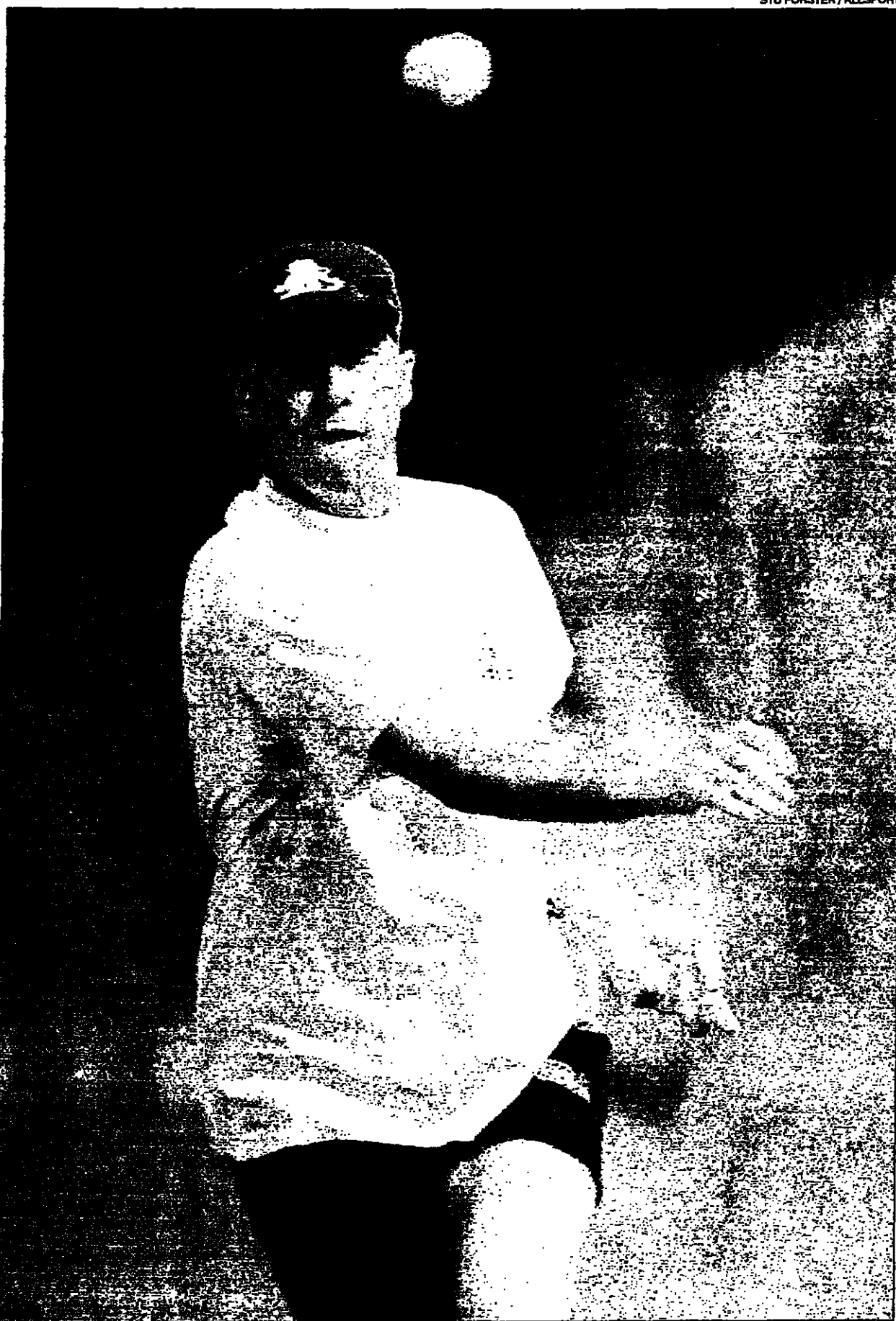
Harare enjoyed its best weather for a week yesterday, raising hopes that the match today may not be spoilt. If it is interrupted by rain, a new system of calculating revised targets will be used. It is a modification of the one used for the World Cup, but is no less complicated. Anyone rash enough to try to understand it while nursing a new year hangover will soon be reaching out again for the aspirin.

England: M A Atherton (captain), N V Knight, A J Stewart, S J Harrison, J G Crowder, C White, R C Seal, R D B Ock, D Gough, C E W Silverwood, A D Mally, ZIMBABWE (captain): G W Flower, M H Tait, A D B Campbell (captain), D J Houghton, A Flower, A C Walter, G J Whitham, P A Stamp, H I Strick, E A Sandes, M R O'Connell, S V Clarke, S C Stamp.

contributed to England losing a low-scoring game by two wickets. In the past, one-day internationals at Harare Sports Club have generally been high scoring affairs, but runs have come at a laborious rate during England's games there on this tour.

The pitch today is not the same one as was used for the second Test match and the groundstaff yesterday took a lot of the grass off the outfield that curtailed the value of many strokes in that game, but England are still not expecting the game to be a run feast.

Irani will be playing his first match since his back trouble flared up after the first one-day international. Having



Atherton unleashes a long throw during practice for the second limited-overs international with Zimbabwe

Winter break back on football agenda

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

WITH the freezing weather playing havoc with the New Year's Day football programme — 36 matches have been lost in the FA Carling Premiership, Nationwide League, Vauxhall Conference and Bell's Scottish League — calls for a mid-winter break are rife again.

John Barnwell, the chief executive of the League Managers' Association, said yesterday: "The general feeling is that there should be some kind of break. The main problems are finding a time to suit everyone and how we would plan our season."

"We would have to make sure the clubs would abide by a break and not go overseas to try to make some money. That happened when I was managing in Greece. We nipped off to play in a four-team tournament."

Barnwell is not convinced that many clubs could afford to stay idle for

Fixtures 30
Racing 31

long. "Many are now ples and, when you're a corporate business, you're affected by market forces," he said. "The Christmas period is a big money-spinner. I doubt if the finance experts at the big clubs would like to give up all that revenue."

The Premiership has been least affected by the weather, with only two games lost. Leicester City's home game against Tottenham Hotspur was called off because of a frozen pitch while Derby County's match against Sheffield Wednesday was cancelled on police advice.

"There was no problem with the pitch, but the approach roads to the ground are treacherous," Jim Smith, the Derby manager, said.

West Bromwich Albion's first division fixture with Tranmere Rovers could depend on the efforts of supporters asked to attend The Hawthorns with shovels and brushes this morning to remove snow lying on the pitch covers. If their efforts are successful, they will be given tickets for the game.

Many FA Cup third-round ties, scheduled for Saturday, are already in danger. Wycombe Wanderers have switched their match against Bradford City to Sunday, giving them extra time to bring in a hot air balloon from Scotland to protect the surface.

Llanelli's rugby union fixture against an Italian XV was lost yesterday while the all-weather card at Southwell is the only racing meeting to survive today.

Operation will not affect Stone's plans for return

BY RICHARD HOBSON

STEVE STONE, the Nottingham Forest and England midfielder player, will undergo a second operation on his injured knee next Monday, three weeks behind schedule. However, he insists that the delay has been precautionary and that he will be fit for the start of next season.

Stone, 25, ruptured his patella tendon in a freak accident during the FA Carling Premiership game against Leicester City on September 7. With the nearest opponent two yards away, his heel slipped and his bodyweight turned over the knee as he was about to accept a routine pass close to the halfway line. He underwent reconstructive surgery two days later and, next

week, the wire that has been holding the knee together will be removed.

"I talked it over with the surgeon, who suggested that it might be as well to leave the operation until the new year, but there is nothing to worry about and the wire is not doing any harm whatsoever while it is there," Stone said.

The delay allowed Stone, capped nine times, to spend a week before Christmas in Goa, where a fellow holidaymaker told him of the resignation of Frank Clark as manager and appointment of Stuart Pearce at the City Ground on a caretaker basis. The absence of Stone, seemingly ideal as a right wing back, has been a key reason for Forest's freefall to the bottom of the FA Carling Premiership.

"I wish I could get out there to help the lads," Stone said. "It could not really have happened at a worse time, but, once it was made clear that there is no doubt about my playing again, I just had to work as hard as possible."

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A naturally bubbly character, Stone broke his leg three times as a teenager and is thus aware of the frustration that long-term injury brings. He has been helping his wife, Judith, in the running of their sandwich shop in the nearby village

of Bingham and has a weekly slot on local radio titled "Banter with the Bulldog".

Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, has monitored Stone's progress and the player could come into consideration for the World Cup qualifying game against Moldova at Wembley on September 10.

John Haselden, the Forest physiotherapist, said: "The problem with Steve is that he wants to run before he can walk. The first six months is healing and rehabilitation. He will be running before the end of the season, but it would be very, very foolish to ask him to play before then."

Neil Lennon, the Leicester City midfielder player, has been charged

with misconduct by the Football Association for allegedly making gestures to rival supporters.

Lennon, the Northern Ireland international, was reported to the police by Newcastle United supporters for the gestures that he was claimed to have made during Leicester's 2-0 win over Newcastle on October 26. Leicestershire police looked at a video of the incident and asked the FA to deal with the matter. Lennon has 14 days in which to respond to the charge.

Brighton have been told that they will be accepted into the GM Vauxhall Conference if they finish bottom of the Nationwide League third division, even though they will not own their own ground after this season.

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FOOTBALL: LIVERPOOL TOP CLASS IN HALF-TERM PREMIERSHIP REPORT

Leader Barnes stays ahead of the pack

The hair is receding, the feet are played and the pace that once made John Barnes such a thrilling athlete has to be used sparingly, no more than once or twice in a match. Yet Barnes remains in pole position, the leader, organiser and guide of Liverpool as the year turns and the race continues towards the destiny of the 1997 FA Cup and Premiership title.

When Barnes scored the final goal of the old year on Sunday, it was a model of composure, an example of the quickness of eye and the acquired knowledge of a man playing his 300th league game in almost a decade of Liverpool red. If he wins a third championship medal, he will be the link between Liverpool and the title, that was broken six years ago. "The brain speeds up, the body slows down," Anthony Dwyer, who, as a prince among baller dancers, knew something of the ageing process, said.

However, Roy Evans, the Liverpool manager, having rebuilt the team around Barnes, sees it this way: "This season is defying all the normal rules. People are asking what it takes to stay up, never mind to win this championship. Leicester gave us a very difficult proposition at Anfield on Boxing Day. Southampton gave us a fair old game on Sunday... but we've shown we are back in contention for major honours. The pleasing thing is the determination is there."

Determination, hunger, perseverance. Are all of these still in Barnes? Evans knows that Steve McManaman can give his team vitality, that Robbie Fowler can sneak goals from little opportunities. He must suspect that Liverpool lack a midfield enforcer in the mould of Roy Keane, of Manchester United, so he comes back time and again to his leader. "John Barnes doesn't surprise me because I see him every day in training," Evans said. "He has a vested interest in the championship — he needs it to come in the next few years because he doesn't know how long he will last."

Barnes has turned from a player once accused of being too laid back into possibly the pivotal performer in such a close-run championship. "It feels a long, hard season," he said. "I don't think we'll go on unbeaten, but neither will the others. The so-called lesser teams are more organised than ever before, all the top teams are capable of beating one another. This Liverpool team is potentially as good as the one in 1990, when the youngsters grew up a bit, we'll see — but a five-point lead is easily catchable if we are not up to it."

A glance at the table suggests that there are five main rivals. Manchester United have the desire, the pedigree and the youth to be champions again. They need more from Eric Cantona and less by way of inconsistency from Peter Schmeichel in the second half of the season. They must also overcome the distraction once Europe is revisited in the spring. Around that time, on

the third weekend of April, we could see at Anfield the vital game, Liverpool versus United.

Arsenal must quickly arrest form that has wrought only three points from the past four games. They need David Seaman to recover from his rib injury and Ian Wright to be less irresponsible and more irreplaceable. His goals are gold dust, but he misses three games through yet another suspension in January.

Wimbledon? Joe Kinnear, the manager, turning sows' ears into silk, getting the maximum from each component, works on one fifth of the audience potential of Manchester United, one tenth of the weekly income. Yet his side's 19-game unbeaten run, trusting mightily on the sprints of Ekeke and Gayle, on the promptings of Earle and Leonard, fell apart at Villa Park a week ago.

It was not just that Wimbledon gifted some of the five goals, more that the team was woefully unassertive before them. Wimbledon are a defiance of logic, a romance on a shoestring and yesterday Ladbroke's shortened the odds on them from 33-1 to 25-1 to become champions.

They stand, for the moment, a place ahead of Newcastle United. How harrowed Kevin Keegan becomes as his team, with a ceiling above all others

ROB HUGHES



Football Commentary

(beating Manchester United 5-0, thrashing Tottenham Hotspur 7-1), betray their pedigree through erratic defence. Peter Beardsley, older than Barnes but no less gifted in soothing a team, slips in form around this time. Newcastle also have to visit Arsenal, Manchester United, Liverpool and Wimbledon before the end of the season.

Below them, Aston Villa, have not quite recaptured the brio of last season. Losing Gary Charles and Gareth Southgate to injury, they rely over-much on Dwight Yorke and Savo Milosevic, his Serbian partner. Yet any team that can commit Sasa Curcic to the bench has an abundance of

riches, if only it can be welded to self-belief.

The Premiership has a very shallow comfort zone. Chelsea, Everton, Sheffield Wednesday and, when not travelling north, Tottenham, are in it.

The Premiership is becoming better, more teams can challenge for the title. Ron Gullitt, the Chelsea player-manager, said. He believes that England's performance during Euro 96, as much as the influx of foreign talent, has improved confidence in the game. Yet Chelsea, scarcely showing desire for the battle at Leeds or at Sunderland, raise the question of whether so many fine foreigners in one team destabilises the English club virtue.

They can play on the highest plane, but are they ready to respond to the tribal demands of the British way?

Everton and Wednesday are nearly teams: capable of frustrating anyone, but surely not ripe for honours. Tottenham are frustrating even their own supporters and their battle lies within.

Immediately below them, from Derby County down, lie the quicksands of relegation fear. Derby, Leicester City and Sunderland came up last season and all have done better than forecast, but Leicester and Sunderland, in particular, have had to run hard merely to stand still in relative mid-table calm.

Coventry City, having spent £18 million and changed managers, needed a further £1 million speculation on Darren Huckerby, their star striker. Four to give them impetus. Four successive wins, though, have suddenly propelled them from bottom to fourteenth place and they should survive. So should Leeds United, even if George Graham's infamously pragmatic means win no friends. West Ham United periodically entertain, yet still the lower reaches entertain them.

Middlesbrough, with such expensive imports and such a leaky defence, could win the Coca-Cola Cup and flirt perilously with relegation. Blackburn Rovers, re-shaped by Tony Parkes, could climb to safety now that Chris Sutton and Graeme Le Saux are fit.

Graeme Souness, the Southampton manager, arrived last summer swearing: "I certainly haven't come here to be involved in a relegation battle. Some of his purchases are better than that, but the truth lies in the table, where the Saints have signed so often with careless giveaway goals. Last, but not least, are Nottingham Forest, whose archaic club structure and indecisive boardroom so undermined Frank Clark, the manager, that he was willing to decamp — even willing to go down to Manchester City.

Predictions are not only unkind, they are foolish when we consider that the Premiership is now as much a commercial concern as a sporting contest. Anyway, it would be easier to study meteorology and to warn of global warming while the world freezes over.



Bjornebye took time to settle but is now in the thick of the Liverpool action. Photograph: Clive Brunsell

Liverpool's Norwegian deliverer supplies quality on demand

Peter Ball meets Stig Inge Bjornebye, an unsung member of the foreign legion

This season has been dominated by the excitement over football's foreign influx. The doings of Vialli and Ravanelli, Emerson, Cruyff and Berger fill the pages of tabloid and broadsheet alike, but in Liverpool's fine run, one of the key players has been a longer serving, and much less heralded, foreigner — Stig Inge Bjornebye.

He feels finally established as an ever-present this season and is playing with visible confidence. "We've been on his case for some time to improve his confidence," Roy Evans, the Liverpool manager, said. "Confidence is a wonderful thing in football, you need to be confident to do things right, and he's been picking up on that all the time."

He has scored important goals this season already, beginning at Middlesbrough on the opening day, his first for the club, but he has also been a ready supplier to his forwards. After Liverpool's 0-0 draw with Sunderland, Peter Reid, the Sunderland manager, was moved to say: "The only threat came from Manchester City — Bjornebye's crosses are real quality."

Bjornebye arrived at Liverpool for £600,000 four years ago, in the dog days of Graeme Souness's spell as manager, as a young left back from Rosenborg BK, Trondheim, then a virtually unknown club in the north of Norway. It is fair to say that

it took him time to settle. Arriving at a club in turmoil did not help, and the shy 22-year-old struggled. "My first game, we lost 5-1 at Coventry," Bjornebye said, "and it went on from there really."

Yet, when he played for Norway, he looked a much better player than he did for Liverpool. "He does better away," one senior Liverpool official said at the time. "Anfield seems to intimidate him."

Bjornebye concedes the point, but there was also the footballing change. English football is often disparaged for its crudeness, but Bjornebye went to Liverpool, a team playing passing football, from a more direct club side, and an international team based on the Charles Hughes philosophy, where long diagonal balls from Bjornebye's accurate left foot were a key element in their attacking play. Obviously, it was not particularly attractive, but it was very successful.

"I prefer Liverpool," Bjornebye said, "but it was hard for me to get into that style, coming from the kick and rush football to playing pass and move."

Now, confidence growing, he has adapted successfully. He began to do so two years ago, holding his place in the team that won the Coca-Cola Cup in 1995. A week later he suffered a broken leg and he was out of the game for almost a year. When he did come back, Rob Jones and then Steve Harkness stood between him and recapturing his first-team place.

Behind the quiet, polite exterior, however, there is a determined character, and Bjornebye battled on. Injuries to Jones and Harkness have opened the way for him and he has grabbed his chance with alacrity.

In the process he looks a better player, attacking with purpose but still defending solidly. Bjornebye himself believes that he is now playing the best football of his career.

"I'm a regular for the second time," he said, "but the first time there was too much variation in my performances. I hope I can stay consistent this season at a high level."

He has done so thus far, reveling in the greater opportunities offered as a wing back. "It's quite a difficult

position to play in," he said. "There's a lot of running and a lot of tactical things involved, but I quite like it now."

"It helps if you are a strong runner. I wasn't as fit in the past as I am now. Sometimes, when I got the ball, I was too tired to do things with it. It's important that, when you get the ball, you feel fresh enough to give it the right touch and hit the right cross, rather than being too tired and mis-kicking."

The greater strength is evident in his powerful running, although he plays it down. "It's nothing major, I'm not training like Linford Christie, but, when you're coming from a broken leg to Liverpool's first team, that's a long way, and it means a lot of work," he said.

"I have to work hard at things to get better. You have got to have a steady mind, do the right things and be professional."

Nobody will doubt Bjornebye's steady mind and professionalism, but Evans sees something else this season. "You're always delighted to see the likes of Stig do well, because he's a great professional," Evans said. "He's come through a system in Norway, and in all of Scandinavia, where they are very disciplined about the whole game. Off the back of that, he has learnt how to have a bit of free spirit himself, and that's the improvement in his game."



Barnes is still calling the shots for Liverpool as he tries to win his third championship winner's medal

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TONIGHT'S LIVE PREMIERSHIP ACTION			
10/11 EVERTON	9/4 DRAW	BLACKBURN	5/2
Goodison Park, Kick-off 5.45pm. Live on Sky TV.			
CORRECT SCORE			
6/1 EVERTON	1-0	14/1 DRAW	2-2
8/1 EVERTON	2-0	8/1 BLACKBURN	1-0
15/2 EVERTON	2-1	16/1 BLACKBURN	2-0
11/2 DRAW	1-1	12/1 BLACKBURN	2-1
8/13 MAN. UTD. 12/5 DRAW ASTON VILLA 4/1			
Old Trafford, Kick-off 5.00pm. Live on Sky TV.			
CORRECT SCORE			
13/2 MAN. UTD.	1-0	6/1 DRAW	1-1
13/2 MAN. UTD.	2-0	14/1 DRAW	2-2
15/2 MAN. UTD.	2-1	10/1 VILLA	1-0
10/1 MAN. UTD.	3-1	16/1 VILLA	2-1

Other scores on request. LATEST ODDS ON WILSON HILL TV TEXT. (Text on 04 9011502100)

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Arsenal to confirm interest if Ince becomes available

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

ARSENAL would be tempted to bid for Paul Ince if Internazionale put him on the market. Arsene Wenger, their manager, said yesterday. "We would think it over if Paul Ince became available," Wenger said. "Yes, of course, Inter will decide the future of Ince because he is under contract, but for his quality, yes, we would be interested, just like many other clubs."

Ince, who joined Inter from Manchester United, was linked with a move to Arsenal last season, but his financial demands proved a stumbling block.

He has been the subject of racial abuse from opposing supporters in Italy and has a poor disciplinary record in Serie A, but while Arsenal are interested in Ince, Wenger said that they were not considering a bid for Jürgen Klinsmann, the former Tottenham Hotspur striker, who is reportedly unsentimental at Bayern Munich.

Manchester United's plans to strengthen their squad in their pursuit of the European Cup have been put on hold. With the qualification deadline on January 15, Alex Ferguson, the United manager, recognises that he may have to

rely on his present squad when Porto arrive for the quarter-final in March.

"There are no players around, and the deadline might be coming up too soon for us," Ferguson said yesterday. "It is looking very remote now that we are going to get any player in."



Ince: under contract

Through the autumn United had been closely linked with Nadal, the outstanding international defender from Spain who had been out of favour at Barcelona, but his appearance for the club in the Cup Winners' Cup, making him ineligible to play for

United in Europe, ended Ferguson's interest. That is a recurring problem.

While Ferguson seems unlikely to buy any overseas players, sorting out foreigners will be one of Frank Clark's problems at Manchester City. His first will be to deal with Nigel Clough's position. Clough is at present on loan at Nottingham Forest.

"I haven't been able to talk to him so far," Clark said, "but I need to find out what he is thinking. I would be very happy if he wants to stay at Molineux Road."

Until Clough's position is clarified, Clark has refused to allow him to become cup-tied by playing for Forest on Saturday. Clough had been the target for some of City's disaffected supporters, but not the only one, with Uwe Rösler responding angrily to abuse at Barnsley last Saturday.

"Getting stick from supporters isn't very pleasant, but it is part of the game, and players have got to put up with it," Clark said. "The only way they can deal with it is by performances on the pitch. It is no good asking the fans to be patient. They've been patient at this club for a long time and we've got to give them hope."

Duffy glories in challenge posed by Edinburgh derby

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

JIM DUFFY takes charge of Hibernian for the first time today for the Edinburgh derby against Heart of Midlothian at Easter Road, welcoming the challenge.

"I don't think I could ask for a better game to begin with," Duffy, the former Dundee manager, said. "If you don't feel motivated as a player for a new year derby against your local rivals, you shouldn't be in football. After that, we have Rangers coming here on Saturday, so I could hardly have had two more exciting fixtures."

Hibernian will have to conquer their Easter Road nerves to give Duffy a winning start, for this season they have won only three games out of ten there. Duffy will be without the suspended John Hughes, but Gordon Hunter, Kevin Harper and Pat McCinlay should be fit after missing the draw away to Aberdeen on Saturday.

Hearts are likely to recall Dave McPherson, the captain, to their defence, and Neil Poynton may also return. They will be looking to John Robertson to add to his tally of goals in these spirited encounters. Robertson scored twice in the 4-1 win over Motherwell last

weekend and his total of league goals for the club now stands at 202, just four short of Jimmy Wardhaugh's record. Hearts were uplifted yesterday by the return of Gary Locke, their young defender, after a seven-month absence. He played for an hour in a reserve match against Motherwell.

Leslie Deans has replaced Chris Robinson as chairman of Heart of Midlothian. The men had intended to rotate the chairmanship when they took over at Tynecastle, but instead have made the change halfway through their five-year plan.

erwell, his first game since injuring a knee in the Scottish Cup final last May.

Aberdeen travel south to face Dundee United confident that the match will go ahead because of the under-21 hearing at Tannadice. Stewart McKimmie, the Aberdeen captain, is back in the squad after a three-match suspension.

United have moved to within three points of third-placed Aberdeen, whose manager,

Roy Aitken, will be looking for an improvement in form after recent defeats by Kilmarnock and Celtic and the draw with Hibernian.

United have Lars Zetterlund in their squad and Tommy McLellan, their manager, has added to his Scandinavian contingent by bringing in Jonas Wirmoia, the Swedish defender, on a month's contract.

Jamie McQuillen is out with a throat infection, so Craig Easton, 18, is promoted to the first-team squad. "He has been doing well for the reserves," McLellan said.

A morning inspection will determine whether the Eile derby between Dunfermline Athletic and Raith Rovers can go ahead at East End Park. Dunfermline, who have conceded seven goals in their past two games, to Hearts and Celtic, expect to have Craig Robertson back in action after a bout of influenza.

Raith are strengthened by the return from suspension of John Millar. A win for Raith, who have lost their past three games, would put them level with Motherwell, whose game with Kilmarnock has been postponed because of a frozen pitch.

THE TIMES NEW YEAR'S DAY GUIDE TO THE PREMIERSHIP

ARSENAL

If Arsenal cannot beat a depleted Middlesbrough, they can surely forget the Premiership. And they will still have Ian Wright, whose three-match suspension does not start until January 4, just in time for the FA Cup. Not that the Arsenal defence, which shipped water in the second half against Villa last Saturday, can afford to relax against Juninho and Ravanelli. But if Arsenal fade in the second half as they did against Villa, there must be real doubts about their stamina. **BM**

ASTON VILLA

1997 is a special year, with Villa Park celebrating its centenary when Tottenham Hotspur visit on April 19. A vast array of commemorative activities are being organised, including a colourful pre-match march from Perry Barr. It is also rumoured that some of Villa Park's culinary delights could be on offer at 1897 prices, with sausage rolls at 1p. In the real world, Villa take on Manchester United at Old Trafford today. Newcastle United and Liverpool in swift succession. Happy New Year. **RK**

BLACKBURN ROVERS

Blackburn will make at least one signing in the next few weeks, although Tony Parkes, the caretaker manager, will no doubt act on the advice of Sven Goran Eriksson. Paul Ince is one name mentioned, and Oliver Bierhoff, of Germany, another. Less exotic is Mike Sheron, the Stoke City forward, whom Parkes has now watched twice, and a £1 million move could be in the offing. Rovers could move out of the bottom three for the first time this season if they defeat Everton today. **DM**

CHELSEA

Chelsea will be looking for revenge against a Liverpool team that pulverised them at Anfield. But there was no Gianfranco Zola in the Chelsea side then. Man-marking seems as unlikely for Zola as for Steve McNamaman, of Liverpool, but it usually seems to baffle Liverpool when it is used. Supplied by McNamaman, a fit Fowler becomes a threat to any defence. Chelsea will be hoping that Grodas's bizarre fumble that cost them on Saturday was just an aberration. **BG**

COVENTRY CITY

Four wins in a row could become five for Coventry today when erratic Sunderland travel to Highfield Road. Whatever Gordon Strachan, the manager, has prescribed to his previously ailing troops should be banded and sold at a fat price, such as Steve Ogilvie. 39, revealed his secret elixir after a club record 554th appearance in the 3-0 win against Middlesbrough on Saturday. "It's true," he said. "I take cod liver oil tablets for my dodgy knees." **RK**

DERBY COUNTY

It appears that sides are beginning to stumble Derby. Alfons Asanovic, their key man, has been increasingly isolated during a run of five matches in which the Premiership newcomers have scored just two points. "We have some willing workers in midfield, but he is the one we look to for a touch of quality," Jim Smith, the manager, said. Asanovic, who does not relish the physical side, can rest with the Sheffield Wednesday game today postponed because of conditions outside the ground. **RM**

EVERTON

Everton need the new year to bring a swift change of fortune. With only one win in six games, their hopes of getting into the thick of the title race are receding fast. Their record against lower opposition - at Goodison in recent years, with Port Vale, Stockport and York all drawing there is not encouraging. Today Watson, Parkinson and Kanchelskis may be pressed into service with Unsworth suspended, and both Stuart and Hinchcliffe out of action in the long term. **PB**

LEEDS UNITED

The holiday period was not kind to Leeds, and they need to start the new year well if the season is not to degenerate into a constant struggle against relegation. David Whelan could return at Newcastle today, and Lee Sharpe and Rod Wallace are both hoping to be fit for a recall. If Wallace comes in, Tony Yeboah seems likely to be the man at risk, his performance at Old Trafford not convincing. George Graham, the manager, that he had been wrong not to play him sooner. **PB**

LEICESTER CITY

Ian Marshall began his career as a defender before joining the forward line to good effect at Oldham. Needs must, however, and Marshall has been a revelation since Martin O'Neill, the manager, drafted him into the back three, originally as a stop-gap measure. In one way the transformation began within days of Marshall's arrival from Ipswich in an £800,000 deal last August. Fed up with mickey-taking, he hacked off his flowing permed locks and thus lost his nickname of "Keegan". **RH**

LIVERPOOL

It is not the best way to spend New Year's Eve, travelling for half a day on snowbound roads, then stuck in a hotel just south of London. Most of the squad will be in bed early, so the first-footing must wait until morning. Roy Evans, the manager, is hoping that celebrations will be performed after the game at Chelsea, where victory would confirm serious title aspirations. "We have been winning matches like this one, and if we maintain such resilience, then we won't be far away," he said. **DM**

MANCHESTER UNITED

With the FA Carling Premiership, the European Cup and the FA Cup still in their sights, the new year holds rich promise for United. But Alex Ferguson, the manager, spoke too soon when he said that the return of Roy Keane and Andy Cole meant everybody was coming back to full fitness at the right time. Falbuser's resurgence of a back injury and Phil Neville's glandular fever leaves United without experienced cover defensively, with Neville likely to be out for a month. **PB**

MIDDLESBROUGH

Bryan Robson, the manager, may be just ten days short of his fortieth birthday but he is contemplating starting in midfield at Arsenal today. Meanwhile, Vladimir Kinkor, a Slovakian left back, awaits a work permit pending a mooted £1 million move to Teesside and Robson confirms he still hopes to sign Miguel Angel Nadal, the Spain defender, from Barcelona, and Paul Ince from Internazionale. "If Paul becomes available, we will be very interested," he said. **LT**

NEWCASTLE UNITED

How do you bring back to earth a side who were hard done by when only scoring seven? Answer, not easily. The last time Newcastle won so well, they embarked on a run that all but extinguished their title hopes. This time, according to Sir John Hall, the chairman, things will be different. "It is essential that we keep it going this time, and we will," he said. "No one has got away from us in the league. There will be four or five teams vying for the title - and we will be one of them." **DM**

NOTTINGHAM FOREST

Stuart Pearce will decide whether to continue as manager for the remainder of the season this coming Tuesday. He will meet Irving Korn, the chairman, after the extraordinary meeting next week, when shareholders could decide to back a takeover bid from a local consortium. Pearce confesses to feeling the strain after just 12 days as caretaker manager and player but much will depend on results at West Ham today and in the FA Cup third-round tie against Ipswich on Saturday. **RH**

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY

It is difficult to appreciate from the league tables, but Sheffield Wednesday currently boast the longest unbeaten run in the FA Carling Premiership. No less than 11 games have passed since the last defeat, but still they are merely clinging precariously from the coat-tails of the pace-setters. "Too many draws," was the explanation of David Pleat, the manager. "But it shows we are difficult to beat, and that is always an endearing quality at this level." Indeed. Today, though, his players will be idle. **DM**

SUNDERLAND

Caring little for dietary political correctness, Peter Reid, the manager, permits his players to consume traditional English cooked breakfasts, to down lagers on coach trips back from away fixtures and he even drops them all off outside nightclubs occasionally. No wonder the spirit at Roker Park is so good. This mood explains why, despite nursing a wired-up broken jaw, Kevin Ball, the captain, has insisted on travelling to Coventry to be with his teammates today. **LT**

HOW THEY STAND

	P	Pts	Goal	Last five
			diff	lig games
1 Liverpool	21	42	+19	WWDDW
2 Manchester Utd	20	37	+17	DDWWWW
3 Arsenal	20	37	+17	WWLDD
4 Wimbledon	19	37	+10	WWWLW
5 Newcastle	20	34	+13	DLDLW
6 Aston Villa	20	34	+10	WWWLW
7 Chelsea	20	32	+3	WWWDW
8 Everton	20	28	+2	DDWLL
9 Sheffield Wed	20	28	-1	WDWDD
10 Tottenham	20	28	-4	WDDWL
11 Derby	20	23	-5	DLDDL
12 Leicester	20	23	-7	WDLDD
13 Sunderland	20	23	-9	LWLWL
14 Coventry	20	22	-5	LWWWW
15 Leeds	20	22	-8	DDDLW
16 West Ham	19	21	-7	DLDLW
17 Middlesbrough	20	18	-13	LDLWL
18 Blackburn	19	17	-5	WDLWL
19 Southampton	20	16	-9	LLWLL
20 Nottingham	20	14	-18	DLWLD

SOUTHAMPTON

Yuri Maximov, the Dynamo Kiev and Ukraine midfielder, has impressed during a trial period, and Graeme Souness, the manager, has tabled an improved offer for Matt Elliott, of Oxford United. The reaction of Souness to Dave Beasant's aberration against Liverpool was the signing of Maik Taylor, the Barnet goalkeeper. Southampton were three points better off at the same stage last season, and had even won an away game, against their opponents today, Wimbledon. **NS**

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

Tottenham Hotspur's Chigwell training ground was a sombre place on Monday, as the aftershock of the 7-1 annihilation against Newcastle United still reverberated. Amid the battered morale, it also emerged that Sol Campbell and John Scales were nursing injuries. Chinks of light were almost non-existent but the form of Allan Nielsen, the three-goals-in-three-games Danish midfielder, at least bodes well. "It is getting better and better for me," he said. **RK**

WEST HAM UNITED

The crowd will be blowing bubbles at half-time today in an attempt to get Upton Park into the Guinness Book of Records and raise money for a local hospice. Harry Redknapp, the manager, contemplates changing a winning team to accommodate Raduciu, who is finally coming to terms with the rigours of English football. "You have to work hard and you have to get kicked up in the air at times," Redknapp said. "It looks as if that is sinking in at last." **KP**

Reports: Brian Glenville, Peter Bell, Russell Kempson, Richard Hobson, Louise Taylor, Nick Szczepaniak, Keith Pike, David Maddock. Statistics: Julian Desborough

WIMBLEDON

"A phenomenal year," was the verdict of Joe Kinnear, the manager, on 1996. "The players should be proud of what they have achieved." Only 18 to go after victory at Everton, where the absence of influenza victims Earle, Holdsworth and Perry meant the return of McAllister, a midfield role for Cunningham, a right back, and a full debut for Duncan Jupp, the Scotland under-21 international, a £200,000 close-season signing from Fulham. All three could continue at Southampton. **NS**

ARSENAL v MIDDLESBROUGH

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1

HOW THEY LINE UP

ARSENAL (from): J Lukic, R Parlor, S Bold, M Keown, A Adams, N Winterburn, P Velez, R Garcia, P Mason, D Bergkamp, I Wright, J Harrison, P Shaw, S Morris, S Marshall, A Linighan, M Posa, V Bartam.

MIDDLESBROUGH (from): G Walsh, C Liddle, C Morris, S Vickers, B Robson, N Cox, J Stevenson, C Blackmore, M Beal, F Ravanelli, Juninho, C Hignett, D Whyte, J A Ffrench, A Campbell, M Summerbell.

CHELSEA v LIVERPOOL

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: 3-3, 1-1, 1-1, 2-2, 2-2, 0-0, 1-0, 0-0, 2-2

HOW THEY LINE UP

CHELSEA (from): F Grodas, M Duberry, R Gullit, S Clarke, D Petrescu, C Burley, R di Matteo, E Newton, S Minto, M Hughes, G Zola, F Leboeuf, A Myers, D Wise, F Sinclair, M Nicholas, K Hitchcock, E Johnson.

LIVERPOOL (from): D James, D Matteo, S-I Bjornbye, J McAllister, M Wright, N Ruddock, P Babb, B Barnes, McNamaman, M Thomas, S Coyle, R Fowler, A Warner, P Berger.

COVENTRY CITY v SUNDERLAND

TICKETS: Seats available

10-YEAR RECORD: 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0

HOW THEY LINE UP

COVENTRY CITY (from): S Ogilvie, R Shaw, L Dalt, P Williams, D Burns, P Teller, E Jess, G McAllister, J Salako, D Dublin, N Whelan, M O'Neill, K Richardson, B Borrows, M Hall, J Flett, P Ndlovu, D Huckerby.

SUNDERLAND (from): L Perez, G Hall, D Kubicki, A Melville, R Ord, D Kelly, P Bracewell, S Agnew, M Smith, S Aston, A Pae, C Russell, M Bridges, M Gray, P Stewart, D Prosser.

DERBY COUNTY v SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY

TICKETS: Seats available

10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1

HOW THEY LINE UP

DERBY COUNTY (from): J Lukic, R Parlor, S Bold, M Keown, A Adams, N Winterburn, P Velez, R Garcia, P Mason, D Bergkamp, I Wright, J Harrison, P Shaw, S Morris, S Marshall, A Linighan, M Posa, V Bartam.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (from): G Walsh, C Liddle, C Morris, S Vickers, B Robson, N Cox, J Stevenson, C Blackmore, M Beal, F Ravanelli, Juninho, C Hignett, D Whyte, J A Ffrench, A Campbell, M Summerbell.

EVERTON v BLACKBURN ROVERS

TICKETS: Seats available

10-YEAR RECORD: 2-1, 0-3, 1-2, 1-0

HOW THEY LINE UP

EVERTON (from): N Southall, P Gerrard, E Bennett, D Unsworth, J Pugh, D Watson, C Short, A Kanchelskis, L Las Fendimond (Newcastle United), M Le Tissier (Southampton), C Gurnier (Sunderland), M Le Tissier (Manchester United), E Barzani (Wimbledon).

BLACKBURN ROVERS (from): S Given, H Berg, J Kerne, C Hendry, G Le Saux, W McGinley, T Sherwood, L Bohinen, C Sutton, K Baloch, J Wilcock, N Gudmundsson, G Fenton, N Meeke, T Flowers, G Doris, P Warhurst, A Williams.

LEICESTER CITY v TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: 2-2, 2-2, 0-2, 2-1, 1-0, 2-2, 1-0, 2-3, 0-0

HOW THEY LINE UP

LEICESTER CITY (from): D Bessant, F Benali, C Lindelov, N Medhurst, A Nelson, E Barzani, U van Gool, M Robinson, S Chetani, S Slater, G Watson, E Oosterstad, D Hughes, M Le Tissier, M O'Leary, S Boshart, M Taylor.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (from): N Sullivan, D Jupp, B McAllister, D Blackwell, A Kimble, N Ardley, V Jones, K Cunningham, O Leard, S Ebdon, E Bickel, M Gyle, D Holdsworth, M Harford, P Fenn, R Egan, C Perry, S Murphy.

MANCHESTER UNITED v ASTON VILLA

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: 3-1, 1-1, 2-0, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-0, 0-0

HOW THEY LINE UP

MANCHESTER UNITED (from): P Schmeichel, G Neville, D May, R Johnson, D Irwin, D Beckham, N Butt, R Keane, R Gigg, E Cantona, O G Solskjaer, P Scholes, A Cole, B McClair, K Porro, R van der Gouw.

ASTON VILLA (from): M Bosnich, F Nelson, A Wright, U Ehiogu, S Burton, R Scimeca, J Taylor, M Draper, A Townsend, D York, S Milosevic, S Curic, C Tiler, J Joachim, T Johnson, M Oakes, L Hendrie, G Farrelly.

NEWCASTLE UNITED v LEEDS UNITED

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1

HOW THEY LINE UP

NEWCASTLE UNITED (from): S Hyslop, S Watson, D Pearson, P Albert, J Beresford, K Gillespie, D Barry, R Lee, P Beardsley, L Ferdinand, A Shearer, L Clark, W Barton, P Smieszek, R Elliott, P Mitton, P Brayson.

LEEDS UNITED (from): N Martyn, G Kelly, A Dongo, C Palmer, G Harte, P Beesley, L Radford, L Bowyer, M Jackson, I Rush, R Wallace, B Deane, A Yeboah, A Gray, I Harte, M Ford, M Beesley, L Sharpe.

LEADING SCORERS

15: Ian Wright (Arsenal)
13: Alan Shearer (Newcastle United)
11: Robbie Fowler (Liverpool), Dwight Yorke (Aston Villa), S-Eriksson (Middlesbrough), Les Ferdinand (Newcastle United), Matthew Le Tissier (Southampton), Ole Gunnar Solskjaer (Manchester United), Eran Ezy (Wimbledon)

CHAMPIONSHIP BETTING

13-14: Liverpool, 2-4: Manchester United, 5-11: Arsenal, Newcastle, 12-14: Aston Villa, 25-1: Chelsea, 33-1: Wimbledon, 55-1: Everton. Odds supplied by Ladbrokes.

WEST HAM UNITED v NOTTINGHAM FOREST

TICKETS: Seats available

10-YEAR RECORD: 1-2, 3-2, 3-3, 1-1, 3-0, 1-1, 3-1, 1-0

HOW THEY LINE UP

WEST HAM UNITED (from): L Mikosko, T Brackler, S Bille, M Ripper, J Dicks, M Bowen, D Williamson, I Bishop, J Moncur, M Hughes, M Nowell, H Porfiro, F Raduciu, F Lampard, S Jones, K Rowland, L Scales, S Potts, M Omoiyimi, L Hodges.

NOTTINGHAM FOREST (from): M Crossley, S Pearce, D Lytle, C Cooper, S Chettle, J Woot, D Phillips, S Blatherwick, S Gerrard, D Saunders, A Haxland, K Campbell, N Jerkin, N Clough, C Allen, B Roy, A Fatts, S Guinan.

5pm Sky Sports 1 Football Special
Everton v Blackburn Rovers (5.45) (Live)
Manchester United v Aston Villa (8.15) (Live)
11.05pm BBC 1 Match of the Day (Highlights)
The official Internet site of the FA Carling Premiership
is at <http://www.facarling.com/>

CRICKET: SLIDE INTO SECOND DIVISION STATUS CONFIRMED

Test league table offers England little comfort

THIS may be a touch difficult to digest, but there is a silver lining of sorts to the two drawn Tests in Zimbabwe during December. By achieving stalemate against the most junior of significant cricket nations, England managed to keep Zimbabwe beneath them in the league table of the year's Test matches.

One defeat would have left England last of the nine countries, a previously unconsidered indignity.

This is perhaps no better or worse than the majority have come to believe during a depressing year in which England won only one of nine Tests, the Edgbaston match against India in June. The league table, however, gives credence to the withering assertion of Alistair Campbell, the captain of Zimbabwe, that England should now be ranked alongside its country and New Zealand as the worst of the Test-playing nations.

Alan Lee identifies the partnership that offers some hope of reversing a decline

None of these three teams can boast a single bowler sufficiently penetrative to regularly take five or more wickets in an innings, the time-honoured measure of Test quality, and, without such bowlers, no side is likely to win very often. Unless England can swiftly harness Dominic Cork with Darren Gough, and hope they bring the best out of each other, it is difficult to see this situation altering for them.

The superficial nature of any table covering only 12 months is advertised by the presence of Sri Lanka in first place. They played only three Tests in 1996 and lost the first of them to Australia by 148 runs, completing a 3-0 series defeat. Their misleading position is entirely due to two

comfortable wins over Zimbabwe in Colombo during September, hardly the mark of world champions at this form of the game.

More realistically, Australia and South Africa share second place, having each won three and lost two of their five Tests. Whatever the outcome of their present series, against West Indies and India, respectively, their three-Test meeting in South Africa in March, and the return bout in Australia, which begins in December, promise to be among the heavyweight highlights of this year.

By their own, hectic standards, Australia had an idle year in 1996, but the same will not be said of 1997, when they are scheduled to play 15 Tests. Interestingly, England played

more than anyone in 1996, when two-thirds of the total of 28 Tests produced a definite result. They are due for the same number, nine, in the coming 12 months, including six summer Tests against Australia.

Pakistan won the most matches and would have their supporters in any argument over the most powerful of modern Test teams, an argument that has gathered intensity in recent years and is now increasingly in need of a measure of official adjudication.

Since the calls for a league championship of Test cricket were first made, both in *The Times* and *Wisden*, support for the idea has been growing in volume and weight.

Various countries have promised their backing and while others remain sceptical, Australia, notable among them, the matter is now sure to be debated at the summer meeting of the International Cricket Council.

Wisden's proposal for an ongoing table, in which the result of each series between pairs of countries is replaced by the outcome of the next corresponding series, seems well worth exploring.

If this was in operation now, however, few arguments would be resolved as first place would be shared by three countries - Australia, South Africa and West Indies. England would be placed two from bottom.

One-day cricket gives England supporters little consolation these days and, again, only Zimbabwe, of Test-playing nations, fared worse than Michael Atherton's team during 1996.

A woeful World Cup campaign, preceded by six one-day defeats in South Africa, was largely responsible.

The number of one-day matches continues to spiral alarmingly. There was an average of one such game every three days during 1996 and Pakistan, those voracious disciples of the art, played 38 of them.

Despite winning the World Cup with vibrant, innovative cricket, Sri Lanka finish only second in the year's exchanges.

South Africa are clearly top of the list of a remarkable record of 25 wins from 30 limited-overs games. I thought at the time they should have won the World Cup. Now I am certain of it.



Taylor, despite building a fine record as Australia's captain, has not passed 50 in his past 12 Test innings

Australian certainties undermined

FROM MICHAEL HENDERSON IN SYDNEY

AUSTRALIA are still licking their wounds after surrendering the third Test to West Indies in Melbourne last week, but in the world of modern international cricket, there is not much time for reflection. Today, at the Sydney Cricket Ground, it is on with the molly as the Carlton and United series resumes with a day-night match between Australia and Pakistan.

The what series? You may well ask. The annual three-nation one-day contest has been renamed, but the effect remains the same. At the height of the Australian summer three teams play off for places in a best-of-three final later this month. Although it is nonsense cricket, it generates plenty of dollars for the Australian Cricket Board and stimulates what Ken Dodd calls the "chuckle muscle".

In the aftermath of the Test defeat, however, Australians are beginning to wonder if there is too much one-day cricket. For the first time, last year, their team played more days of limited-overs cricket than Test variety. They remain the best side in the world over five days but, to remain there, there may have to be an adjustment of interest.

To English eyes, it seems peculiar that a single defeat has led to such agitated debate, particularly as Australia still lead in the series, but there is a general feeling that runs and wickets in the Sheffield Shield - the domestic equivalent of the English county championship - count for less than they once did.

A proposal from the Victorian Cricket Association, to reduce the number of games played, and to avoid clashes with Test matches, has been received sympathetically. At the moment Australia Test

players turn out infrequently for their state sides. David Boon, who retired last year, once went a whole season without playing for Tasmania and Mark Taylor, the national captain, is not often found opening the batting for New South Wales.

A debate about the quality of the domestic game is familiar to English cricket-lovers. To Australians, who have come to regard the Sheffield Shield as the strongest competition in the world, the events of the last week have come as a bit of a shock. All of a sudden people are asking: How good are our bright young sparks?

It has not yet reached the point where runs have become a false currency, but, as they struggle to find replacements for Boon and Border, and Dean Jones for that matter, people are wondering whether the likes of Ponting, Bevan and Langer are quite as good as they have been marked.

Ponting has been dropped from the Test side, Bevan is in and out and Langer must wait to see whether he is retained for the fourth Test, in Adelaide.

This fevered debate has even extended to Taylor, an outstanding captain who has not passed 50 in his past 12 Test innings. The fact that he lacks a regular opening partner has not helped him come to terms with this loss of form, although he claims not to be concerned about his lean trot.

When he could do with getting some decent match practice, Taylor must instead lead Australia in this interminable one-day series. By the time they meet, West Indies in Adelaide on January 25, Australia will probably have played another eight limited-overs games. Stuart Law and Tom Moody return to the fold and Andrew Bichel, a fast-medium bowler, makes his international debut.



Gough: big part to play

1996 TABLES

Test matches	P	W	L	D	% won
1 Sri Lanka	5	3	1	1	60.00
2 Australia	5	3	1	1	60.00
3 South Africa	5	3	1	1	60.00
4 Pakistan	5	3	1	1	60.00
5 West Indies	5	2	2	1	40.00
6 India	5	2	2	1	40.00
7 New Zealand	5	2	2	1	40.00
8 England	5	1	3	1	20.00
9 Zimbabwe	5	0	5	0	0.00

Limited-overs internationals	P	W	L	TNR	% won
1 South Africa	30	25	5	0	83.33
2 Sri Lanka	29	18	1	1	82.00
3 Pakistan	28	15	0	0	80.00
4 Australia	28	13	0	0	80.00
5 West Indies	20	10	0	0	50.00
6 India	20	10	0	0	50.00
7 New Zealand	20	9	1	1	45.00
8 England	20	9	1	1	45.00
9 Zimbabwe	20	3	1	0	15.00
10 UAE	5	1	4	0	20.00
11 Kenya	5	0	5	0	0.00
12 Holland	5	0	5	0	0.00



Cork: hope for future

TEST SERIES AVERAGES

England										Zimbabwe										
Batting										Batting										
	M	NO	Runs	HS	Avg	100	50	Ct	St		M	NO	Runs	HS	Avg	100	50	Ct	St	
J.P. Crawley	2	3	166	112	80.00	1	0	6		P.A. Strang	2	3	1	104	47	50.00	0	0	0	0
A.J. Stewart	2	4	1	241	101	80.23	1	1	5	A.D.R. Campbell	2	3	0	135	84	45.00	0	1	7	0
N.V. Knight	2	4	0	197	86	49.25	0	0	0	A.Flower	2	3	0	132	112	44.00	0	0	0	0
H. Hussain	2	4	0	130	113	32.50	0	1	1	G.W. Flower	2	3	0	116	73	38.66	0	1	3	0
G.P. Horne	2	4	1	70	50	23.33	0	1	1	D.L. Houghton	2	3	0	100	37	33.33	0	0	2	0
P.C.R. Tufnell	2	4	0	11	9	11.00	0	0	0	A.J. Vivalda	2	3	0	89	50	29.67	0	0	0	0
R.D.G. Cook	2	4	0	21	11	10.50	0	0	0	G.J. Whithell	2	3	0	64	56	21.33	0	1	1	0
C. White	2	4	0	9	9	9.00	0	0	0	H. Streak	2	3	0	34	19	17.00	0	0	0	0
M.A. Atherton	2	4	0	34	16	8.50	0	0	2	B.C. Strang	2	3	0	7	4	7.00	0	0	1	0
D. Gough	2	4	0	7	3	3.50	0	0	0	E.A. Brandes	2	3	0	7	4	7.00	0	0	1	0
A.D. Murray	2	4	0	4	4	4.00	0	0	1	M.H. Duggan	2	3	0	2	2	2.00	0	0	0	0
C.E.W. Swales	2	4	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	1	S.V. Clarke	2	3	0	2	2	2.00	0	0	0	0
										H.A. Duggan	2	3	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0
* denotes not out																				
Bowling										Bowling										
	O	M	R	W	Avg	Best	5w	10w			O	M	R	W	Avg	Best	5w	10w		
C.E. Silverwood	25	8	71	4	17.5	3-63	0	0		G.A. Whithell	2	8	28	1	35.00	1-16	0	0		
R.D.G. Cook	26	9	178	8	22.33	3-49	0	0		P.A. Strang	2	11	42	1	42.00	1-16	0	0		
C. White	26	9	178	8	22.33	3-49	0	0		H. Streak	2	8	28	1	35.00	1-16	0	0		
P.C.R. Tufnell	62.5	19	192	7	27.42	4-41	0	0		M.H. Duggan	2	11	42	1	42.00	1-16	0	0		
C. White	16	6	43	1	40.60	1-21	0	0		G.W. Flower	2	11	42	1	42.00	1-16	0	0		
D. Atherton	25	8	150	1	50.00	1-32	0	0		B.C. Strang	2	11	42	1	42.00	1-16	0	0		

* denotes not out
Source: ICC/PCA Cricket Record

Source: ICC/PCA Cricket Record

Knighthood brings Bedser just reward for old-fashioned virtues



Sir Alec: big-hearted

The citation pertaining to Alec Bedser's new year knighthood, the fifteenth to be awarded to anyone from the world of cricket, picked out his services to the game as a player and an administrator. There could be no mention of his unwavering, uncompromising defence of old-fashioned virtues, whether to do with batting, bowling, business or behaviour, for which he is so widely renowned.

It was Arthur Mailey, the Australian anti-wind and leg-break and googly bowler, who first said, when another batsman was given a handle to his name, that the last bowler to be knighted was Sir Francis Drake. That was before

Gubby Allen and Richard Hadlee were given their knighthoods, and they both made Test hundreds in addition to bowling fast and well. For many years, too, Allen had been the eminence grise at Lord's when the honour came his way.

As a cricketer, Bedser was a bowler pure and simple. From the time he took 22 wickets in his first Test matches, against India in 1946, until his batteries started to run down in 1954, he was the pillar of England's attack. The Australians brought the best out of him, as well as taking him to their hearts. In successive series against them, there in 1950-51 and in England in 1955, he took an astonishing 66 wickets at 17.6 apiece.

John Woodcock pays tribute to a great England bowler who still commands universal respect

Sir Donald Bradman still talks about the leg cutter with which Bedser bowled him for a duck in the first innings of the Adelaide Test match in 1946-47. They have been the firmest of friends since and have kept in regular touch. Nobody will be more delighted than the Don that 40 years on, Alec, has now been knighted, though many will be just as pleased, the Prime Minister, an inveterate cricket supporter, among them, as well, of course, as Alec's still nearly identical twin, Eric.

Broad-shouldered, big-hearted and with a classical action, Alec Bedser bowling was a study in marble and bronze. With his great hands, he could make the leg cutter behave like a fast leg break, and no sun was too hot or day too long for him. He gained pace off the pitch, just as Maurice Tate, another from the same mould, had. If I saw Alec bowl a long hop, I do not remember it. Even today, nothing vexes him more than a young bowler with a 30-yard run-up landing the ball in his own half of the pitch.

It was always fun, as indeed it still is, to be present at Alec's daily, rather high-pitched, lamentations. He still has much wisdom to impart, but the young do not listen any more as they think he is out of date. That is a real sadness, and they do not know what they are missing.

As a selector from 1962 to 1989 and chairman from 1969 to 1981, as manager of two MCC sides to Australia and assistant manager of another, as president of Surrey in 1967 and as someone who answers every call upon his good nature, ready and free of charge, Bedser adds renown to the following list of cricketing knights, given in alphabetical order:

Sir George "Gubby" Allen, Sir Donald Bradman, Sir Neville Cardus (though his services to music were a contributory factor), Sir Colin Cowdrey, Sir Richard Hadlee, Sir Jack Hobbs, Sir Leonard Hutton, Sir Francis Lacey (secretary of MCC, 1898 to 1926), Sir Henry Leveson-Gower, Sir Garfield Sobers, Sir Frederick Toone (manager of three MCC tours to Australia), Sir Pelham Warner, Sir Clyde Walcott and Sir Frank Worrell. The third of the three Ws, Sir Everton Weekes, is another, though his public service in Barbados, as well as his prowess at bridge, which he played internationally, may have had something to do with that.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Bristow pitches for knockout contest

ERIC BRISTOW, the former "King of Darts", became the first player to qualify for the quarter-finals of the Red Band world championship at Purfleet yesterday but then launched an attack on the group system.

Bristow scrambled through to the last eight, despite a 3-1 defeat by Gary Mawson, as he had the best legs difference in his three-man group. He had beaten Bob Anderson, the former Embassy world champion, in his opening match, with Anderson then beating Mawson, and the triangle being completed with the Mawson's victory yesterday.

However, Bristow had a difference of plus four, 20 legs to 16, with Anderson, at 17-11, in second place and Mawson third at 16-20. After his defeat, Bristow said: "I think that if you are beaten in any match then you should be on your way home."

"Let's have 32 players and a straight knockout. I worked it out last night that having beaten Bob Anderson by 11 legs to six I could afford to lose by four legs to Mawson and still get through to the quarters."

Squash: Simon Parke, of Yorkshire, has followed up his return to national No 1 with a promotion to No 5 on the new world ranking list, issued yesterday by the Professional Squash Association on which Jansher Khan, of Pakistan, is the world champion, maintains his long tenure at No 1.

Rugby league: Northland, an amateur team from Humber-side, have been ejected from the Slick Cut Challenge Cup for playing two registered professionals in their first round victory over Milton. The Rugby Football League ruled that Northland fielded two professionals in Rob Hutchinson (Hull KR) and Darren Grice (Featherstone) and reinstated Milton.

Tennis: Martin Lee, of Great Britain, is thirteenth in the end-of-year ITF junior world rankings for boys' singles and fourth in the doubles. Sebastian Grosjean, the European champion, from France, topped both events, with Amelie Mauresmo, his compatriot, taking the girls' singles. Ekaterina Roubanova was eighth for Britain.

FOR THE RECORD

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

SAN DIEGO, Holiday Bowl: Colorado 33 Washington 21

ATHLETICS

FELL RUNNING: Kighley, Aidan Long (Ireland) and John Long (Ireland) won the 100m and 200m races respectively at the 1996 World Championships in London. Kighley won the 100m in 1:45.2, Long won the 200m in 3:45.2.

BASKETBALL

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION: NBA. Chicago won 108-96 Detroit in Game 5 of the Eastern Conference Finals. Chicago won the series 4-1.

BOWLS

MACHYNLLETH: Welsh women's national pairs qualified for the 1997 World Championships in Scotland. The winners were Rhonda Aspinall and Gwyneth Jones.

ICE HOCKEY

NATIONAL LEAGUE: NHL. Detroit won 3-2 against the New York Rangers in Game 5 of the Eastern Conference Finals. Detroit won the series 4-1.

RUGBY UNION

TOUR MATCH: Pooled. Llanelli v Llanelli. Llanelli won 14-10.

DARTS

PURPLET, Essex Red Band world championship: Group A: R. Anderson (Wales) 4-0 G. Mawson (Wales), D. Grice (Wales) 4-0 G. Mawson (Wales), D. Grice (Wales) 4-0 G. Mawson (Wales).

FOOTBALL

Monday's last results: (22) LEAGUE. Premier division. Postponed: Cardiff City v Swansea. JEWSON WESSSEX LEAGUE. First division. Postponed: Whitburn v Barmston.

HOCKEY

MILTON KEYNES: Women's national tournament. Under 21. West 2-2 East 2-2. Under 19. West 2-2 East 2-2.

POOLS DIVIDENDS

LITTLEWOODS: December 28: Triple chance: 22/1, 22/1, 22/1. Double chance: 10/1, 10/1, 10/1. Single chance: 5/1, 5/1, 5/1.

SAILING

BT GLOBAL CHALLENGE: Second leg (18-19 Dec). Winner: J. Watson (USA). Second: J. Watson (USA). Third: J. Watson (USA).

TENNIS

ADELAIDE: Men's tournament. First round: J. Watson (USA) 6-4, 6-3 J. Watson (USA). Second round: J. Watson (USA) 6-4, 6-3 J. Watson (USA).

THE TIMES

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FOOTBALL

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SNOW REPORTS

Depth (cm) Conditions Runs to resort Weather (°C) Last snow

ANDORRA Soldeu 25 155 good powder good snow -2 31/12

AUSTRIA Kitzbuehl 10 50 icy varied fair sun -10 25/12

Obergurgl 45 145 good varied fair cloud -9 26/12

Saï 15 60 good varied fair sun -8 24/12

St Anton 45 190 good varied fair cloud -7 23/12

CANADA Whistler 80 180 good varied good snow -9 30/12

FRANCE Alpe d'Huez 80 240 fair varied fair fair -12 26/12

Megève 60 180 good powder good cloud -6 31/12

Meribel 60 140 fair varied fair cloud -6 20/12

The Times calendar of sport 1997

Ancient city must be worthy of modern times

Athens knows that much rides on the success of the world championships, says David Powell

Ignoring the Virgilian maxim about Greeks bearing gifts, the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) has put its trust in Athens to stage the 1997 world athletics championships. The world governing body has good reason to expect that the gift from its host, which is waiting the traditional \$7 million IAAF grant, ought not to shatter into tiny pieces.

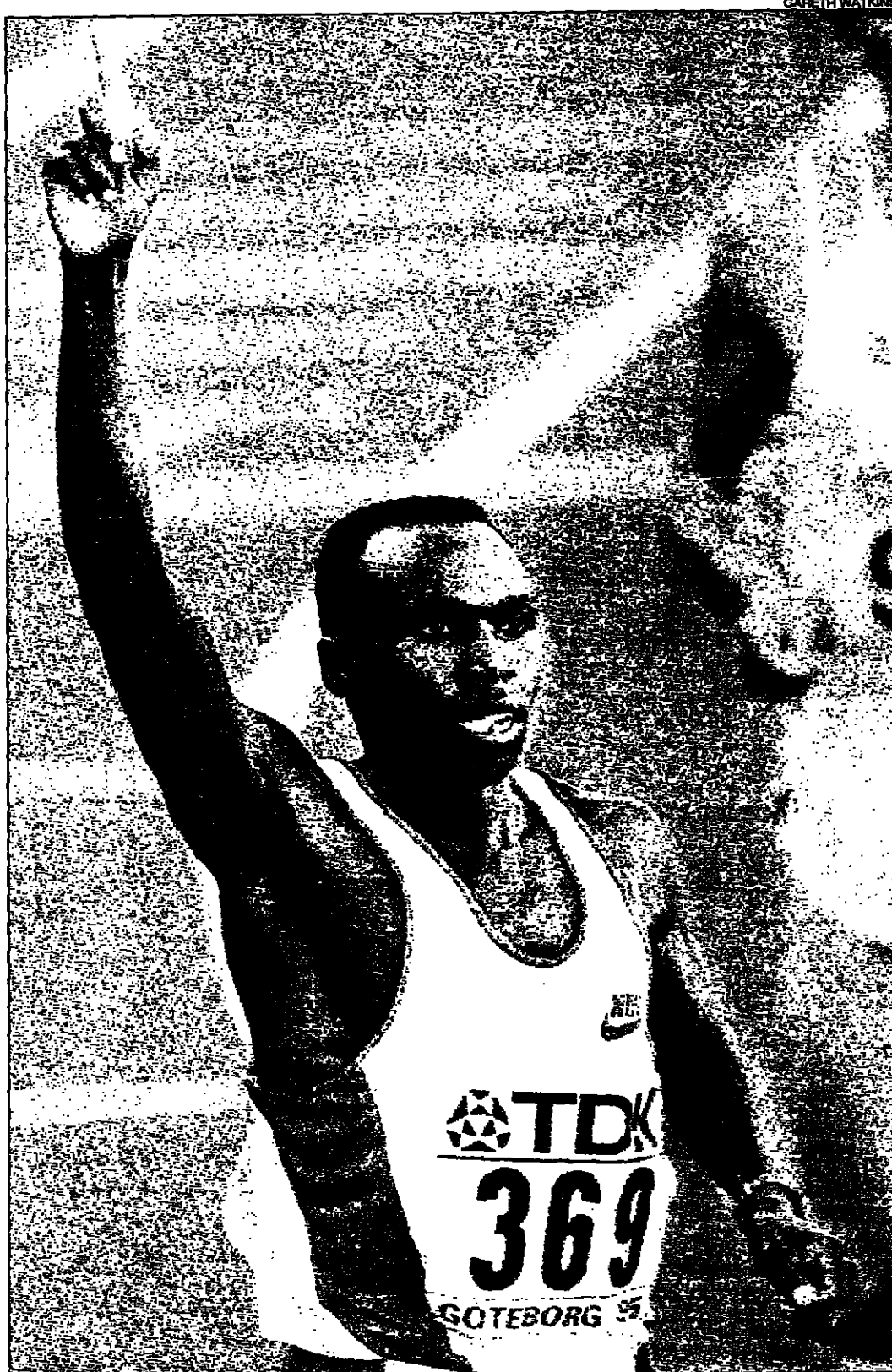
After the organisational catastrophe of the Olympic Games in Atlanta, Athens must impress in the staging of the sixth world championships if it has to have a chance of winning the vote to host the 2004 Olympics. The decision will be taken only three weeks after the biggest sports event of the year has drawn to a close in the Greek capital, Athens, where the first modern Olympics were held in 1896, felt that the centennial Games should have gone there, but acknowledges now that it relied too much on history and that, to succeed this time, it must meet modern-day demands.

"You can imagine what a promotion this might be for the Greek Olympic bid if they have a problem-free world championships," said IAAF secretary, said. Improving on the Atlanta efficiency standard might be about as demanding as asking Michael Johnson to beat the 100 metres record, but proving as good an athletics meeting will be more difficult.

Atlanta witnessed arguably the greatest track and field show in Olympic history: Johnson's never-to-be-forgotten world record and 200/400 metres double; Donovan Bailey's 100 metres world record; the majesty of Marie-José Pérec in the 200 and 400 metres; the sovereignty of Svetlana Masterkova in the 800 and 1,500 metres; a fourth long jump gold medal for Carl Lewis; a profusion of close finishes; the drama of Linford Christie's protest at his disqualification in the 100 metres, and of Hicham el Guerrouj's fall in the 1,500 metres.

Yet, even as Atlanta unfolded, fresh buds were beginning to bloom. One, Daniel Komen, surely will flower in Athens. Komen, 20, narrowly failed to make the Kenya team for Atlanta, but, inspired by watching the Olympics on television, within five weeks he set one of the most extraordinary world records and won the overall men's grand prix title.

Komen took 4.44sec off Noureddine Morceli's 3,000 metres world record. His ambition for 1997 is to win in Athens. "I am the 3,000 metres world record-holder but without having any world championships or Olympic gold medal," Komen said. "I am training for the world championships."



Kipketer, left, will be hoping to add to his gold medal in the 800 metres from Gothenburg two years ago while much is expected of the talented Komen

One flower denied a vase in Atlanta was Wilson Kipketer, the world's best 800 metres runner who, as a Kenyan-born Dane, was not eligible for the Olympics, although he had won the world title in Gothenburg two years ago. So, with Komen and Kipketer added to the parade of Olympic champions in Athens, we may find championship records being smashed like plates in a Greek restaurant.

Prize-money will be paid for the first time, cash replacing cars.

which have been awarded to winners at the past two world championships. Some \$5 million is in the pot, winners receiving \$60,000, runners-up \$30,000 and bronze medal-winners \$20,000. A bonus, probably \$100,000, will be paid to any athlete setting a world record.

There will be no new events in Athens, with the women's pole vault and hammer scheduled to join the programme in 1999. "The principle is that we want to have a rehearsal at continental level first,"

Gyulai said. "In Budapest [at the 1998 European championships], they will have both and we will have both in 1999." Only half of full prize-money will be paid the first time these events are held, increasing to 75 per cent the second time and 100 per cent in 2003. "We do not want to pay for a less valuable performance," Gyulai said, noting that it takes time for new events to be fully competitive.

The IAAF has two concerns. "The biggest problem for Athens is going to be the pollution and

traffic," Gyulai said. "Traffic is worse than in the rush hour in London." A world championships traffic lane is to be set aside while the IAAF hopes that pollution will be reduced because the occasion coincides with a holiday period.

In October, reports from Athens indicated a dispute between the Greek Government and the Greek athletics federation (Segas), which threatened the smooth running of the championships. Segas, which had signed a contract with the

IAAF to run the championships, withdrew, saying that it had been marginalised by the state. However, Andreas Fournas, the Greek Minister for Sport, Stratos Molivas, the president of Segas, and Primo Nebiolo, the IAAF president, met in November, after which it was announced that "a final agreement was reached... settling any previous controversies". Greece must hope for a controversy-free championships. Its future Olympic bid depends upon it.



Action from the Olympic marathon of 1896, the last time that Greece hosted a global athletics championship



AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Jan 4-5: NFL divisional play-off games
Jan 12: AFC and NFC championship games
Jan 26: Super Bowl XXXI, New Orleans
Apr 12: WFLA season begins
June 21-22: World Bowl '97
Aug 31: new NFL season begins

ARCHERY

Mar 16: National indoor championships, Amesbury
May 24-26: All-British field championships, Burnley
June 7-8: UK Masters, Lillleshall
Aug 9-10: British target championships, Lillleshall
Dec 7: Junior national indoor championships, Pyon

ATHLETICS

Jan 4: World Cross Challenge, Belfast
Jan 11: Reebok UK CAU cross-country championships, Luton
Jan 12: World Cross Challenge, Amorebata, Spain
Jan 19: World Cross Challenge, Seville
Jan 25-26: AAA indoor championships, Birmingham
Feb 1: World Cross Challenge, Tourcoing, France; British Universities championships, Leeds
Feb 7: Mitrova Games, New York
Feb 9: World Cross Challenge, Alcala, Portugal
Feb 15: Northern Ireland cross-country championships, Lurgan; Reebok English cross-country relay championships, Mansfield
Feb 16: Reebok indoor tour, Lorient, France; World Cross Challenge, Chiba, Japan; Scottish cross-country championships, Perth
Feb 20: Reebok indoor tour, Stockholm; Grand Prix II, Melbourne
Feb 22: World Cross Challenge, Nairobi
Feb 23: Reebok indoor tour, Birmingham; World Cross Challenge, Dordrecht, Luxembourg
Feb 28-Mar 1: United States indoor championships, Atlanta
Feb 28-Mar 2: European veterans' indoor championships, Birmingham
Mar 1: English Schools cross-country championships, Newark
Mar 2: Great Britain world cross-country championships trials, Northumbria
Mar 7-8: World indoor championships, Paris
Mar 8: Reebok English national cross-country championships, Havant; Scottish Schools cross-country championships, Irvine; Welsh Schools cross-country championships, Llanidloes
Mar 9: World Cross Challenge, San Vittore, Italy
Mar 17: Grand Prix II, Johannesburg
Mar 22: IBSB schools and under-20 cross-country international, Chesham; British veterans' cross-country championships, Sunderland
Mar 23: World cross-country championships, Turin
Mar 26: British police cross-country championships, Manchester
Apr 6: Paris Marathon
Apr 13: Flora London Marathon
Apr 19-20: World Roadwalking Cup, Prague
Apr 20: Rotterdam Marathon
Apr 21: Boston Marathon
May 4: Brazil Grand Prix, Rio de Janeiro
May 10: Osaka Grand Prix, Osaka, Japan
May 18: US Track and Field Grand Prix, Charlotte, North Carolina
May 25: Preontaine Classic, Eugene, Oregon
May 26: Grand Prix II, Seville
May 30: Dupleston Grand Prix, Seville
May 31: Grand Prix II, San Jose; Grand Prix II, Hengelo; Michael Johnson v Donovan Bailey Challenge, Toronto
June 2: Grand Prix II, St Denis, France
June 5: Golden Gala, Rome
June 7: Zhuravskiy Memorial, Moscow
June 10: Grand Prix II, Bratislava
June 12-15: United States world championships trials, Indianapolis
June 15: Grand Prix II, Gateshead
June 16: Grand Prix II, Helsinki
June 21-22: European Cup, Munich
June 25: Gaz de France Grand Prix, Paris
June 29: Grand Prix I, London
July 2: Athleticsissima '97, Lausanne, Switzerland
July 4: Bostell Games, Oslo
July 7: DN Galan, Stockholm
July 9: Grand Prix II, Linz, Austria
July 10-13: European under-23 Cup, Turku, Finland
July 11-13: English Schools championships, Sheffield
July 12-14: Great Britain world championships trials, Birmingham
July 16: Nikea, Nice, France
July 24-27: European junior championships, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Aug 1-10: World championships, Athens
Aug 12: Zurich Weltklasse, Zurich
Aug 22: Van Damme Memorial, Brussels
Aug 24: Cologne Weltklasse, Cologne
Aug 26 or Sept 5: ISTAF '97, Berlin
Sept 12: Grand Prix I, Rieti
Sept 13: IAAF Grand Prix final, Fukuoka, Japan
Sept 28: Berlin Marathon
Oct 4: Hall marathon world championships, Kosice
Nov 2: New York City Marathon
Dec 14: European cross-country championships, Oeiras, Portugal

BADMINTON

Jan 31-Feb 2: National championships, Norwich
Feb 6-8: National under-16 championships, Telford
Feb 21-23: Friends Provident grand slam tournament, Manchester
Feb 28-Mar 2: National under-19 championships, Bletchley
Mar 10-15: Volvo All England open championships, Birmingham
Mar 27-30: European veterans' championships, Galeshead
Mar 30-Apr 6: European junior championships, Nymour, Czech Republic
Apr 18-20: Friends Provident grand slam tournament, Redbridge
May 20-June 1: World championships, Glasgow

BALLROOM DANCING

Jan 6: The Star Ball, London
Jan 21-23: UK Open Championships, Bournemouth
May 23-30: British Open Championships, Bournemouth
July 11-13: UK Closed Championships, Southampton
Sept 20: World Professional Latin Championships, Germany
Oct 4: World Amateur Latin Championships, Gothenburg
Oct 7-9: International Championships, Brentwood and London
Nov 8: World Amateur Modern Championships, Karlsruhe, Germany
Nov 20-23: National championships, Blackpool
Nov 24: World Professional Modern Championships, Blackpool

BASEBALL

Apr 1: Opening day of Major League season
July 8: All Star game

BASKETBALL

Jan 19: Men's and women's National Cup final, Sheffield

BILLIARDS

Jan 29: European Championship, semi-final round, England v Portugal, Newcastle
Feb 9: NBA All-Star game, Gund Arena, Cleveland
Feb 26: European Championship, semi-final round, England v Russia
Mar 2: 7UP Trophy final, Birmingham
Mar 16: European Keno Cup final, first leg, European Ronchetti Cup final, first leg
Apr 4: European Keno Cup final, second leg, European Ronchetti Cup final, second leg
Apr 24: NBA play-off begins
May 3-4: Bundesliga Championship final, Wembley
June 6-18: European women's Championship final, Budapest
July 24-25: European Championship final, Spain
Sept 13-14: new season begins
Oct 18-19: McDonalds championships, vbc, Nov 7: NBA season begins

BOBSLEIGHING

Jan 12-19: European Championships, Kongssee, Germany
Jan 20-Feb 2: World championships, St. Moritz
Feb 9-16: Junior world championships, Altenberg, Germany
Feb 11-18: World Cup (sixth round), Calgary
Feb 19-26: World Cup (seventh round), Nagano, Japan
Nov 4-9: World Cup (first round), Calgary
Nov 25-30: World Cup (second round), Winterberg, Germany
Dec 7-9: World Cup (third round), Cortina, Italy
Dec 9-14: World Cup (fourth round), La Plagne

BOWLS

Jan 12: Under-25 international match, Wales v England, Amersford
Jan 20-Feb 2: World championships, St. Moritz
Feb 9-16: Junior world championships, Altenberg, Germany
Feb 11-18: World Cup (sixth round), Calgary
Feb 19-26: World Cup (seventh round), Nagano, Japan
Nov 4-9: World Cup (first round), Calgary
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The Times calendar of sport 1997

Continued from page 27

June 29: Budweiser Irish Derby, The Curragh
July 2: Coral Eclipse, Sandown
July 8: Princess of Wales's Stakes, Newmarket
July 9: TWT International Aviation July Stakes, Newmarket
July 10: Darley July Cup, Newmarket
July 13: Kildangan Irish Oaks, The Curragh
July 26: King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes, Ascot
July 28-Aug 2: Galway Festival
July 29: William Hill Cup Handicap, Goodwood
July 30: Sussex Stakes, Goodwood
July 31: Schweppes Golden Mile, Goodwood
Aug 1: Jockey Club of Kenya Malecomb Stakes, Goodwood
Aug 2: Voeve Stewards' Cup, Goodwood
Aug 10: Henric 57 Stakes, Leopardstown
Aug 19: Judder International Stakes, York
Aug 20: Tote Ebor Handicap, York
Aug 21: Northampton Stakes, York
Aug 23: Tippecanoe Celebration Mile, Goodwood
Sept 6: Sprint Cup, Haydock
Sept 7: Mowlang Stud Stakes, The Curragh
Sept 10: Tote-Portland Handicap, Doncaster
Sept 11: East Coast Doncaster Cup, Doncaster
Sept 12: Laurence Pomer Champagne Stakes, Doncaster
Sept 13: Perseus St Leger, Doncaster
Sept 20: Ladbrokes Air Gold Cup, Ayr
Sept 21: Miff Mill Race Stakes, Newbury
Sept 22: Irish St Leger, The Curragh
Sept 27: Queen Elizabeth II Stakes, Ascot
Sept 28: Fillys' Mile, Ascot
Sept 30: Shadwell Stud Chevelay Park Stakes, Newmarket
Oct 2: Middle Park Stakes, Newmarket
Oct 4: Tote Cambridge Stakes, Newmarket
Oct 5: Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, Longchamp
Oct 17: Dewhurst Stakes, Newmarket
Oct 18: Dubai Champion Stakes, Tote
Oct 19: Sheikh Zayed Stakes, Tote
Oct 25: RACING POST Trophy, Doncaster
Nov 4: Melbourne Cup, Flemington
Nov 8: Breeders' Cup, Hollywood Park
Nov 15: Murphy's Gold Cup, Cheltenham
Nov 23: Japan Cup, Tokyo
Nov 25: Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup, Newbury
Dec 13: Triplemint Gold Cup, Cheltenham
Dec 26: King George VI Chase, Kempton
Dec 27: Coral Welsh National, Chepstow

RACKETS

Jan 25-26: Professional singles championship, Torridge
Jan 30-Feb 9: Open singles championship, Queen's Club
Feb 10-15: Combined Services championship, Queen's Club
Feb 16-23: Amateur doubles championship, Queen's Club
Feb 25: University match, Oxford v Cambridge, Queen's Club
Mar 16: National League final, Winchester
Mar 19-24: Public Schools doubles championship, Queen's Club
Apr 4-13: Open doubles championship, Queen's Club

REAL TENNIS

Jan 10-14: Professional doubles championship, Queen's Club
Feb 6-8: Seacoast Silver Regatta, Torridge
Feb 10-15: Combined Services championship, Queen's Club
Feb 28-Mar 1: University match, Oxford v Cambridge, Manchester
Mar 8-18: Amateur singles championship, Holyport
Apr 23-27: Women's British Open singles championship, Seacoast
May 2-5: Amateur doubles championship, Meriton Motors, Holyport
May 5-11: Professional singles championship, Holyport

ROWING

Mar 8: Women's head of the river, Tideway
Mar 19: Schools head of the river, Tideway
Mar 22: Head of the River race, Tideway
Mar 23: Women's University boat race, Oxford v Cambridge, Henley
Mar 29: University boat race, Oxford v Cambridge, Tideway
Apr 5: Vespa scullers' head of the river, Tideway
May 23-25: National schools regatta, Nottingham
May 31-June 1: World Cup regatta, Munich
June 21-22: Henley women's regatta: World Cup regatta, Paris
July 2-6: Henley Royal Regatta
July 11-13: World Cup regatta, Lucerne
July 18-20: National championships, Nottingham
July 19-20: Nations cup under-23 championships, Milan
July 26: Home International, Home International
Aug 1-3: Coupe de la Jeunesse, Home International
Aug 6-10: Junior world championships, Haverhill
Sept 1-7: World championships, Alghero
Oct 4: Thames valley sculling challenge
Oct 11: Pairs head of the river, Tideway
Nov 7-9: Masters regatta, Adelaide
Nov 8: Fours head of the river, Tideway

RUGBY LEAGUE

Jan 31-Feb 2: World nines, Townsville, Australia
Mar 1: Australian Super League season begins
Mar 2: First and second division seasons start
Mar 11: University match, Oxford v Cambridge
Mar 14: Staines European Super League season begins
Mar 22: First Six, Cui Challenge Cup semi-final
Mar 29: Second Six, Cui Challenge Cup semi-final
Apr 12: Tri-series (New Zealand, New South Wales, Queensland) begins
Apr 25: Australia v New Zealand, Sydney
May 3: Six, Cui Challenge Cup final, Wembley
June 6-22: First series of world club championship
July 18-Aug 3: Second series of world club championship
Sept 7: First and second division premiership begins
Sept 7: Staines Premiership begins
Oct 4: World club championship semi-finals
Oct 11: World club championship final
Oct 17: New Zealand v Australia, Auckland
Nov 1: Great Britain v Australia, vbo
Nov 8: Great Britain v Australia, vbo
Nov 15: Great Britain v Australia, vbo

RUGBY UNION

Jan 1: Emerging Wales v United States, Cardiff
Jan 4: Ireland v Italy, Dublin; Heineken Cup semi-final, Leicester v Toulouse; South v United States; Scotland Under-18 v Wales Under-18, Myside
Jan 4-6: Pairs of the East sevens
Jan 5: Heineken Cup semi-final, Bive v Cardiff
Jan 7: Pairs of the United States
Jan 11: Wales v United States, Cardiff
Jan 17: Ireland v France A, Donnybrook; Scotland v Wales A, Myside; Scotland Under-21 v Wales Under-21, vbo; Ireland Under-21 v France Under-21, vbo
Jan 18: Ireland v France, Dublin; Scotland v Wales, Edinburgh; World Cup quarter-final, Sri Lanka v Singapore; Australia, vbo; CIS county championship quarter-finals
Jan 19: Scottish Cup third round

Lions no longer big game in Africa

David Hands, rugby correspondent, looks at the chances of an endangered species seeking success in a hostile environment

When André Markgraaff, the South Africa coach, left Great Britain last month at the conclusion of his team's tour to Argentina, France and Wales, there was a grim smile on his face. 1996 had been a hell of a year, it seemed to say, but 1997 was going to be different. Markgraaff believes that the team that he developed during that tour will start bearing fruit when the British Isles arrive in May for their first tour to South Africa since Bill Beaumont's 1980 team promised much, yet fell by the wayside to a 3-1 series defeat.

The gap in the long-running series, of course, was created by the existence in South Africa of the apartheid regime, which was toppled only in 1992. The Lions were due to visit in 1986 but, diplomatically, no formal invitation to tour was ever forthcoming from the late Danie Craven, then president of the South African Rugby Board. Australia filled the Lions' void in 1989 and their last tour — again ultimately unsuccessful — was the 2-1 series defeat to New Zealand in 1993.

The common thread running from 1989, through 1993 and so to this year is Ian McGeechan. His appointment as coach for a second time in New Zealand was unique

and the opportunity to do so for a third time will surely remain unparalleled. Bearing in mind that he was also a key playing member of the 1974 Lions, who made their invincible way through South Africa under the leadership of Willie John McBride, McGeechan's value to a threatened species needs no embellishment.

That the Lions are threatened is no secret. The prolonged spat over television rights last year that threatened the continuation of the five nations' championship in its present form demonstrated the potential for division that exists in the increasingly nationalistic world of rugby. Ironically it is the southern-hemisphere countries who may ensure the continuation of tours, partly because of the Lions' strong history and partly as a variation to the diet of invasions (South Africa, New Zealand and Australia) fare.

Yet the southern-hemisphere nations have ample reason for regarding the British as second-class rugby citizens. Playing standards have yet to advance sufficiently to catch up with the strong provincial teams that exist in the south and the muddled approach to professionalism, notably in England, has earned few plaudits from down under.

Thus the dice are stacked against the Lions in the country where even New Zealand have found success so elusive. Markgraaff, you imagine, perceives the Lions as a *hors d'oeuvre* before the tri-nations series, the only doubt in his mind being the potential for injuries to his own players in the demanding Super 12 series in April and May. Just to ensure that the Lions have been well and truly softened up before the first of the three internationals, in Cape Town in June 21, the programme gives them three matches in succession against the most successful provinces in the country: on June 7 they play the famous Blue Bulls of Northern



Beaumont was the last British Isles captain in South Africa, when his team lost the series 3-1

Transvaal in Pretoria, four days later they meet Transvaal in Johannesburg and on June 14 they meet Natal, the victors over Transvaal in the Currie Cup final last year, in Durban.

Just to round off a hectic fortnight, the intervening match before the internationals is against the Emerging Springboks, whose likely quality can be judged by the calibre of players who toured Britain with South Africa A during the past two months. It will therefore be of primary importance that McGeechan's midweek team

performs as effectively as their counterparts of 1974 — as distinct from those of 1993 in New Zealand, who fell apart.

The pre-Christmas internationals have confirmed certain obvious candidates for the Lions party. Robert Howie, the Wales scrum half who enjoyed such a good game against South Africa last month, will surely be first choice in his position, with Gregor Townsend, of Scotland, as his likely partner. Since Townsend is also the Scotland captain, he must be a candidate for that role, though his

comparative youth may tell against him in a job that demands an ability to cut across national divisions.

A year ago Rob Wainwright, the Scotland flanker, looked an odds-on prospect as captain, but he has not played this season and may struggle to make the tour party. Phil de Glanville, of England, possesses the necessary maturity but, again, is by no means a certain certainty to be a first-choice Lions centre and that, above all, is the prime requisite for the tour leader.

Jan 18-22: Tempest world championships, Durham
Sept 3-13: Star world championships, Marblehead, United States
Sept 11-15: Snipe world championships, San Diego
Sept 20-21: Women's national championship, United States
Sept 21: Start of Whitbread Round the World Race, Southampton
Oct 5-13: Gold Cup match racing, Bermuda
Oct 13-19: National match racing championship, Bletchley, Bedfordshire
Nov 7-14: Tornado world championships, Bermuda

SHOOTING

Jan 10-30: Great Britain Australian tour
Feb 7-8: British air rifle championships, Bletchley
Feb 14-15: British air rifle championships, Bletchley
Feb 23: British running target championships, Bletchley
Mar 20-23: RAF pistol championships, Bletchley
Mar 29-31: British rifle championships, Bletchley
Apr 17-20: Army open pistol championships, Bletchley
May 3: UMLFA schools meeting, Bletchley
May 3-5: English smallbore championships, Bletchley
May 4-5: NRA team in Europe, Bletchley
May 10-11: NRA 350m championships, Bletchley
May 24-26: English air rifle championships, Bletchley
May 14-15: Inter-counties rifle meeting, Bletchley
June 28-July 6: RAF, Royal Navy and Royal Marines championships, Bletchley
July 4-6: Territorial Army championships, Bletchley
July 5-6: British Commonwealth Rifle Championships, Bletchley
July 7-8: NRA Services meeting, Bletchley
July 12-13: NRA Historic Arms meeting, Bletchley
July 12-17: NRA Match rifle meeting, Bletchley
July 14-17: NRA Schools meeting, Bletchley
July 18-19: World Cup, Wengen, Switzerland
July 18: Cadet national match, Bletchley
July 18-28: NRA Imperial meeting, Bletchley
July 24-27: European champion of champions tournament, Athens
Oct 1-2: World Cup, Wengen, Switzerland
Nov 3-5: Paralympic world team championships, Kuala Lumpur
Dec 1-8: Maldives international event, Bombay

SQUASH

Jan 5-6: Commercial Union British junior open championships, Sheffield
Jan 21-27: British national championships, vbo
Mar 16-18: National schools championships final, vbo
Mar 22-30: European junior championships, Haverhill
Mar 26-Apr 6: Lakes British Open championships, Cardiff
Apr 18: National League final
Apr 23-25: European team championships, Haverhill
May 4-11: World doubles championships, Hong Kong
May 10-11: Prince national club finals, vbo
May 19-21: World men's Open, Bof
May 21-22: World junior women's championships, Rio de Janeiro
May 21-27: World Games, Lohi, Finland
May 21-27: World Open club championships, London
Sept 24-27: European champion of champions tournament, Athens
Oct 1-2: World Cup, Wengen, Switzerland
Nov 3-5: Paralympic world team championships, Kuala Lumpur
Dec 1-8: Maldives international event, Bombay

SKING

Jan 4-5: Fina World Cup event, Hong Kong
Jan 6-8: Fina World Cup event, Peking
Jan 22-23: Fina World Cup event, Espoo, Finland
Jan 25-26: Fina World Cup event, Malmö, Sweden
Jan 28-29: Fina World Cup event, Glasgow
Feb 1-2: Fina World Cup event, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany
Feb 4-5: Fina World Cup event, Imperia, Italy
Feb 6-8: Fina World Cup event, Peking
Feb 26-Mar 1: Cup team championships, Stockholm
Apr 10-13: European trials, Sheffield
July 12-13: Fed Cup team trials
July 14-20: ATP championships, Stuttgart and Washington; Czech women's Open, Karlsruhe, vbo; Women's international, Palermo
July 21-22: LTA county cup, various venues
July 22-23: Bank of the West women's classic, San Diego, vbo
July 28-Aug 2: ATP Tour, Montreal; Toshiba women's classic, San Diego; Maria Lankovits Open, Austria
Aug 4-10: ATP Tour, Cincinnati; Acuna women's classic, Los Angeles
Aug 11-17: ATP championships, Indianapolis and New Haven; Do Matarin women's Open, Toronto; United States women's hardcourt championships, Atlanta
Aug 25-Sept 2: United States Open, Flushing Meadows, New York
Sept 8-13: NEC world youth cup
Sept 13-14: Bournemouth international open
Sept 15-21: Nielsen international women's championships, Tokyo
Sept 19-21: Davis Cup semi-final; Davis Cup world group qualifying round
Sept 22-28: Walsdorf women's international
Sept 23-28: Compaq Grand Slam Cup, Munich

SNOKER

Jan 2-5: Liverpool Victoria charity challenge, Birmingham

Sept 29-Oct 4: Sparkassen women's cup, Oberstdorf, Germany; Chinese women's Open, Peking
Oct 4-6: Fed Cup final
Oct 8-12: ATP championships, Vienna and Singapore; Porsche women's grand prix, Riedstadt
Oct 13-18: European women's indoor championships, Zurich
Oct 20-26: ATP Tour, Stuttgart; Bell women's challenge, Quebec City; Scot women's Open, Libramont
Oct 27-Nov 2: ATP Tour, Paris; Kremlin women's cup, Moscow
Nov 3-8: American women's cup, Chicago
Nov 10-15: ATP Tour world championships, Philadelphia
Nov 11-18: Guardian Direct national championships, Telford
Nov 17-23: ATP Tour world doubles championships; WTA Tour championships, New York; Volvo women's open, Pattaya City, Thailand
Nov 29-30: Davis Cup final

TRIATHLON

Mar 9: Ironman New Zealand, Auckland
Mar 16: European winter triathlon cup final, Meis, Italy
Apr 13: Ironman Australia, Forster/Tuncurry, vbo
May 17-18: European duathlon, Glogow, Poland
May 24: Ironman Lanzarote
June 1: World long-distance triathlon championships, Nice; World long-distance duathlon championships, Zolingen, Switzerland
June 14: Windsor triathlon
June 22: British triathlon championships, Epsom
June 28: Ironman Japan, Lake Biwa
July 5-6: European triathlon championships, Vuokatti, Finland
July 13: Scarborough triathlon, Ironman Europe, Roth, Germany
July 19: British middle-distance triathlon championships, Loughborough
July 28: European Lilo championships, Meis, France; Paros triathlon, Milford Haven
Aug 2-3: European long-distance triathlon championships, Denmark
Aug 3: Ironman Switzerland, Zurich
Aug 10: British team relay championships, Holme Pierrepont
Aug 17: International triathlon grand prix series event, Portsmouth
Aug 24: British duathlon championships, Swindon; Ironman Canada, Portofino
Aug 30: International triathlon grand prix, Rotterdam
Sept 6: Home international duathlon and Scottish duathlon championships, Dumfries
Sept 7: Bournemouth triathlon
Sept 13-14: World duathlon championships, Guernsey, Spain
Sept 26: London triathlon
Oct 4: International triathlon grand prix, Honolulu
Oct 11: Ironman Hawaii world championships, Kona, Hawaii
Oct 18: European duathlon cup final, Gales
Oct 23: European triathlon cup final, Antalya, Turkey
Nov 16: World triathlon championships, Perth, Australia

WATER SKIING

Feb 15-18: English Volleyball Association Student Cup finals, Leeds
Apr 5-6: English Cup finals, Sheffield
Apr 13: Royal Bank Scottish Cup finals, Edinburgh
May 10-11: EVA County Cup finals, Liverpool
May 16: City of Glasgow European Cup tournament
June 14: Scottish Open, Perth

WRESTLING

Mar 21-22: Home nations tournament, Sheffield
Mar 23-24: Home nations tournament, Millfield School
May 17: Championship finals, Walsail
May 18: Four nations tournament, Glasgow
Aug 13-24: European championships, Seville

WRESTLING

July 19-20: National championships, vbo
July 24-27: European championships, Seville
Aug 2-10: World youth championships, vbo
Aug 16-17: National senior championships, vbo
Aug 20-21: British masters, vbo
Sept 20-21: World championships, Colombia

WRESTLING

Feb 15-18: British powerlifting championships, Birmingham
May 7-11: European powerlifting championships, Birmingham
May 16-18: European weightlifting championships, vbo
May 20-21: World junior men and women's weightlifting championships, Cape Town
June 22-25: European junior men and women's weightlifting championships, Seville
July 5: British weightlifting championships, vbo
Dec 5-14: World weightlifting championships, Changmai, Thailand

WRESTLING

Mar 29-31: National racing championships, vbo
Apr 12-13: National racing championships, second round, Hayling Island
Apr 26-27: National racing championships, third round, Ramsey
May 3-5: National board sailing championships
May 10-11: National racing championships, vbo
May 12-13: National racing championships, vbo
May 22-23: National racing championships, 8th round, Hove
June 28-29: National racing championships, seventh round, Teesdale
Aug 22-25: National racing championships, eighth round, Albury
Sept 6-7: National board sailing championships
Sept 13-14: Youth and masters national championships, Weymouth
Sept 20-21: National racing championships, vbo
Oct 17-18: National racing championships, final round, Poole
Oct 22-23: Inter-national board sailing championships, Garmisch-Partenkirchen

WRESTLING

Apr 4-5: Freestyle World Cup, Denver
Apr 16: Scottish Open freestyle championships, vbo
May 7-10: European freestyle championships, Walsail
May 22-25: European freestyle championships, vbo
June 1: British Open freestyle championships, Walsail
July 5-8: Challenge Cup of Great Britain, Manchester
July 12-13: Women's world freestyle championships, vbo
Aug 28-Sept 1: World freestyle championships, Kazan, Russia
Sept 10-13: World Greco-Roman championships, Walsail, Poland
Sept 20: English Open championships, venue to be announced
Nov 12-14: Greco-Roman World Cup, Tehran

Compiled by Robert Hands

John Hopkins looks back at a remarkable year for a golfer whose best is still to come

Future burning bright for Tiger — the chosen one

*Tiger! Tiger! burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful
symmetry?*

William Blake

No career burnt brighter at such a tender age than that of Tiger Woods, the prodigious golfer, who celebrated his 21st birthday on Monday and flew from his million dollar home in Florida to spend it among the blackjack tables and fruit machines of Las Vegas. "Tiger wanted to make his birthday an occasion to remember rather than just have a dinner with his parents or some such," a member of his management team said. "So he went to Vegas with some schoolfriends to do some gambling."

Though he has come of age for little more than 48 hours, Woods already finds himself in a position in golf that has not been matched since the emergence of Jack Nicklaus, at almost the same age, 35 years ago, and Arnold Palmer before that. Indeed, Woods has exceeded those two icons in the success that he has had since August 27 when, in a 13-word statement, he confirmed that he had turned professional. Perhaps one has to go back to 1930, when Bobby Jones, the legendary amateur, won the Open and Amateur titles of the United States and Great Britain in one dizzy spell, to find a golfing phenomenon of similar proportions.

Nobody has made such a professional debut as Woods, who finished among the leading five players in five consecutive tournaments, something that no rookie had done before him. The fact is that Woods, whose father is a Thai, has taken the game away from being the sole domain of a middle-class, country club, predominantly white constituency and caused it to enter the consciousness of a far wider audience than ever before. If there was any doubt about this, then consider this: Michael Jordan, the basketball player, declared that Woods was his biggest hero on earth.

Sport in the United States is best chronicled by *Sports Illustrated*, the authoritative weekly magazine. When *Sports Illustrated* requests a round of golf with the President, he it Bush or Clinton, it gets it. Late last month it added the gift to the gingerbread of Woods's



At 21, Woods has taken the world of golf by storm and captured the imagination of enthusiasts in a way not seen since the emergence of the great Nicklaus

recent life by naming him as its sportsman of the year.

In doing this, it was acknowledging the remarkable interest generated in Woods since he won his third successive US Amateur, sixth United States Golf Association title in all, in mid-August. It began when he signed contracts worth \$60 million over five years,

excluding bonuses, with Nike, the sportswear company, and Titleist, the golf ball manufacturer. "Eight million dollars a year! That's over three times what Greg Norman gets," Hughes Norton, Woods's manager, is alleged to have said when outlining the terms of the Nike deal to his client.

There was no lessening of

interest in Woods when 21 of his first 27 rounds as a professional were in the 60s, contributing to him making the fastest jump into the world's top 50 golfers ever. Then, just to cap it all, Woods won two of his first eight tournaments, winning \$740,000 (about £450,000). Golf, they say, is a game of inches. Here was a young

man roaring ahead in leaps and bounds. It was unheard of.

When the stars threw down their spears
And watered heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

"The interest in Tiger has been greater than in any client we have ever had," Bev Norwood, vice-president, golf publishing, at the International Management Group, said. "He has received requests to be on the covers of seven non-sports magazines. His interview requests have slowed down now to about 20 each week."

All the major television networks have requested him. The Bill Cosby sitcom show would write an episode around Tiger if he would agree to appear in it. If we had wanted to, I could have filled every working day since he turned pro with interviews with journalists, appearances on chat shows and situation comedies and the like."

After the success that Woods has had these past three months, Nicklaus's observation at the US Masters last year, to the effect that Woods could win more Masters than he and Palmer combined, no longer sounds exaggerated.

At times, Woods's parents say things that jar on the ears of others, specially other parents. "Tiger has Thai, African, Chinese, American, Indian and European blood," Tida, his mother, said. "He can hold everyone together. He is the Universal Child." In this extravagant claim, she is backed up by Buddhist monks in Los Angeles and Thailand who, after

'If he becomes a politician, he will be either a president or a prime minister'

reading Tiger's astrological charts, said: "Tiger has wondrous powers. If he becomes a politician, he will be either a president or a prime minister. If he enters the military, he will be a general."

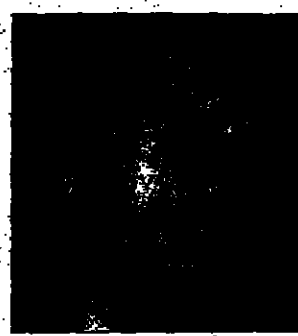
In an article in *Sports Illustrated*, Earl Woods is quoted as saying about his son: "Tiger is the Chosen One. He'll have the power to impact nations. Not people, nations. The world is just getting a taste of his power."

This would sound frightening, were it not for two facts. First, that Woods is a phenomenon, as we have seen; secondly, that he carries such sentiments with obvious ease. "I don't see any of this as scary or a burden," Tiger said in the same article. "I have always known where I wanted to go in life. I've never let anything deter me. This is my purpose. It will unfold."

*Tiger! Tiger! burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful
symmetry?*

Rolling back the years to a world of difference

SIMON BARNES



Midweek View

Sport is real life on fast-forward. I have often said this now I propose to prove it. For, in sport, everything is exaggerated, often to absurd levels: stratospheric elation and cataclysmic dejection. Triumph and disaster dance hand-in-hand to the music of sport equanimity is the eternal wallflower as the endless gawdite of sport continues.

Real history unfolds at a leisurely rate in world affairs. Even in such allegedly frenetic matters as party politics, the march toward denouement takes place in slow motion. A week may be a long time in politics, but half a second is an eternity to an athlete in competition.

In family life, generation succeeds generation in units of about 30 years; but, in sport, entire dynasties grow, reign, subside into decadence, crash and plummet, and the entire cycle takes no more than a few years. Heroes come and go like mayflies. A year passes in sport and all is different: a decade and the entire landscape has changed.

So, with a cat-scattering thump, the essential reference book for all enthusiasts of the sporting round lands on the doormat: the *Sports Yearbook 1997*, the omnispot Wisden. This book has existed in various forms under various sponsors for not quite a decade and, in order to prove my fast-forward thesis, I turned back to the first one.

It was published as *The Sportsman's Almanac 1900*, under the editorship of Matthew Engel, who now edits, with some style, the single sport Wisden. It tells of sport's 1889, so let us examine, as we enter a new year, a gap of eight years. Eight years: a political season, an historical moment, a geological nano-second, a sporting eternity.

Eight years: another country — they do things differently there. Survey it: the sporting landscape is not just changed, it is virtually unrecognisable. Endless scenic upheavals have erected entire mountain ranges, demolished continents, emptied oceans, flooded entire nations. Let us start with football.

'Everything that was set in stone in 1989 has crumbled away'

tom. The politically-motivated debate on identity cards for supporters continued. Football was haunted by disaster, hag-ridden by violence, a game descending into contempt and poverty.

English cricket, however, began its summer filled with the brightest optimism. Most expected considerable success in the Ashes series under David Gower, but it turned out to be the beginning of the downward spiral into a national joke. England lost 4-0 to Australia. Gower was duly dumped at the end of it all and Ian Botham was not picked for the winter tour, a decision that he described as "macabre". The West Indians, meanwhile, were unbeatable. The Dubai inquiry looked into Ben Johnson and the

drugs business. Steve Ovett, still a leading athlete, burst into tears on television. Mike Tyson would never be beaten. Desert Orchid won the Cheltenham Gold Cup and Nashwan was, briefly, the horse of the century.

The England rugby team made the first moves in a climb away from the status of national joke, and they did better than expected in the five nations' championship. All the same, France won the title more or less as a matter of routine, and for the fourth year running. Who could ever think of stopping them? Rugby league was a winter game and Widnes won the championship.

Snooker was still sexy and Steve Davis won the world championship for the third year running. Ivan Lendl was the world's No 1 tennis player, though Boris Becker won Wimbledon. Steffi Graf, winning Wimbledon for the second time, looked rather promising; Chris Evert retired with 157 tournament victories. A decent English tennis player? No chance.

Meanwhile, Alain Prost whinged his way to the Formula One world drivers' championship, but everyone knew that Ayrton Senna, who came second, had an extra dimension to his skills. The year was surely just a blip in his personal pattern: history was his for the taking.

Eight years in sport, and not so much as changed as a different world. Everything that was set in stone in 1989 has crumbled: one eternal order has succeeded the next in the twinkling of an eye. Everything that seems most solid, settled and certain in sport today will change, and change soon, for that is sport's nature. Hemman, Cantona, Shearer, Hill, Dettori, Faldo: enjoy it while you can, for sporting lease has all too short a date.

Sport is extreme, crazed, wild, miserable, delightful, absurd and gone in a flash. Rather like your own youth. *The BBC Radio 5 Sports Yearbook 1997*, edited by Peter Nichols, published by Oddball, price £12.99.

BOWLS

New body defended by Corsie

By DAVID RHYS JONES

WITH the world's leading lawn and carpet bowlers poised to take control of the professional side of their sport, Richard Corsie, the chairman of the Professional Bowls Association (PBA), was keen yesterday to play down suggestions that the game could fall victim to player power.

The PBA's new company, the World Bowls Tour Limited (WBT), which is launched today, will look after bowls at its highest level, and will replace the World Indoor Bowls Council (WIBC) as the sport's leading organising body once the Saga world indoor championships are over this month.

"We are not a breakaway group," Corsie, who has won the world title three times, said. "We have consulted with the sport's governing bodies — the World Bowls Board and the WIBC — at every stage. We invited them to sit on our board — an offer which they have so far declined."

"Our initiative will unify the sport at top level, so that we can speak with one voice, and make a more professional impact with sponsors and television companies. It represents the most exciting and significant development in our game since Sir Francis Drake's famous dalliance on Plymouth Hoe. Everyone will benefit — at every level of the sport."

The WBT has pledged to give its "full support and co-operation" to the WIBC in the promoting of the 1997 world championships at Preston this month; and the WIBC, in handing over the reins to the players, has, in its turn, promised "full support and co-operation" to the tour for the four remaining events on the present BBC contract.

The quiet revolution sees players taking a leading role in the game without the trauma seen in other sports. Corsie said: "We created the WBT in order to achieve our goals for more television, more sponsorship, and more events — because we want more opportunities for our members as professionals."

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

This signalling problem occurred in the 1995 Bermuda Bowl.

Dealer West Love all IMPs

♠ 9 8 7 6	♥ 10 7 3
♦ J 4 3	♣ 4 2
♠ K Q 3	♥ K Q 8 6 5
♦ A K J 8 6 4	♣ A J 10 9 8 7 6
♠ 5 3	♥ 4 2
♦ A 7 2	♣ 5
♠ 4 2	♥ A K J 10
♦ 10	♣ 10

Contract: Six Clubs doubled, by South Lead: Ace of diamonds

When West (Chris Convery, playing for South Africa) could not double Five Clubs, East (Craig Gower) correctly decided to bid on and, to ensure the best lead against Six Clubs, he bid Five Diamonds. On the ace of diamonds, Gower played the nine. Now Convery was afraid that the ace of spades would stand up as, with seven spades, West might have bid immediately over Five Clubs. Hence East should play the queen of diamonds on the ace. As that technically denies the king, it forces West to try spades.

Year end congress
The Swiss teams at the year end congress was won on a split tie by Barnet and Maggie Shenkin, Victor Silverstone and Gerald Haase; second were Akram Zaman, Peter Edelman, Malcolm Pryor and Tony Eastgate.

Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

- CHAMPART
a. A kind of lease
b. Half of a meadow
c. Field sketching
- COWAN
a. A milkmaid
b. A mountain ash
c. A wall-builder
- CLASTIC
a. Inelastic
b. Tending to tears
c. Broken rocks
- CONIROSTER
a. A rabbit census
b. A bird
c. Cock-crow

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Reverse hat-trick

Michael Adams, the pre-tournament favourite at Hastings, has caused a sensation by losing his first three games. In the third round he went down to Eduard Rozentalis in a sharp variation of the Caro-Kann. Xie Jun (the former women's world champion, from China), the early leader, was toppled by Stuart Conquest. Hebden and Rozentalis now share the lead on 2½/3.

White: Eduard Rozentalis
Black: Michael Adams
Hastings, December 1996
Caro-Kann Defence

1 d4 d5
2 d4 d5
3 exd5 cxd5
4 c4 Nf6
5 Nc3 Ne6
6 Nf3 Bg4
7 exd5 Nxd5
8 Qc2 Nf6
9 d5 Nd4
10 g3 Nc6
11 Bb5+ Bb6
12 Nxb6 Nc7
13 Ne7 Ne7
14 Qxb7 Qb7
15 Q-0 Q-0
16 Re1 Bb6
17 Bg5 Bb6
18 Bb6 Bb6
19 d6 Bb6
20 Qc7 Ne5
21 Re3 Re3
22 Qxb8 Rxb8
23 Rd1 Rb8
24 Ne4 Kg7
25 b4 Nd7
26 Rc3 Rb6
27 a3 Is
28 Nc5 Nf8
29 d7 Nf8
30 Ne4 Re8
31 Re7 Ke7
32 Nc5 Rb6
33 Ra7 Ne6
34 Re1 Kf6
35 Nxb6 Rb6
36 Rxb6+ Rb6
37 Nc5 Rb6
38 Kf1 g5
39 Ke2 h5

Diagram of final position

Short's triumph

Nigel Short, Great Britain's top-ranked grandmaster, has won the powerful Koop Tjuchem tournament in Groningen. Holland, coming ahead of a field that included many of the world's leading players.

Chess information

The Groningen web site, which contains all the games with notes, can be accessed on <http://www.noord.bart.nl/ssg/gron1.htm>.

Times book

The *Times Winning Moves 2* contains 240 chess puzzles from international grandmaster Raymond Keene's daily column in *The Times*, and is available now from bookshops or from B.T. Batsford Ltd (tel: 01376 321276 at £6.99 plus postage and packing).

Raymond Keene writes Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend on Saturday.

Solution on page 37

McGeechan dreams of taking Lions to higher plane

There have been 11 international meetings involving the home unions in the pre-Christmas period (if you include England's meeting with the New Zealand Barbarians in that category) and it is no great reflection on British or Irish rugby that the most encouraging of them could be perceived as the 37-20 defeat that South Africa inflicted upon Wales.

That, at any rate, is the view of Ian McGeechan, who, next summer, will take the best 35 players from those islands to play South Africa. McGeechan, the coach for the third successive time to the British Isles team, might reasonably have hoped to have pencilled in half his tour party, but now he must look to the five nations' championship for more positive food for thought.

However, the Lions selectors will be noting club form as well as that of the various countries, and that is where McGeechan has found most of his encouragement at the half-way point of the British season. The open-minded conjunction of players, coaches and referees has offered a potent mixture in the English first division, not all of it

sufficiently meaningful, but indicative of a changing attitude. McGeechan perceives three distinct stages for the leading British players: the attitude adopted in domestic rugby, the creation of a more expansive game by the national teams, leading to the highest level of all — the Lions, whom McGeechan takes to be one of the top three sides in the world, with New Zealand and South Africa.



McGeechan: optimistic

David Hands suggests that players' performances for their clubs as well as countries may hold the key to selection for the British Isles touring team

"That is how the Lions are regarded in South Africa," he said, "and that is the challenge for us next summer."

"The Lions are bigger overseas than any national team and, for that reason, they are more important now than they have ever been for the tactical development of our different levels and more competitions here, but though it may be only a small group of players, there is still some value in having a Lions test at home each season, to represent the highest possible level British players can aspire to."

McGeechan leaves no room for doubt over the significance with which he regards the Lions concept, yet he is enough of a realist to know that results on the field have to reflect the worth of that concept. In 1989 his Lions beat Australia 2-1, in 1993 they lost by the same margin to New Zealand, the forthcoming series in South Africa, you might say, will be the defining one.

McGeechan, though, has looked in vain at the international stage for the tactical ambition that will be required to beat South Africa. "We won't win there by playing a tight game or a short game," he said. "We have to match them in the tight areas, but we have to remain as flexible as we can, to make them work. That's where New Zealand adapted so well last summer: they didn't beat South Africa in the scrums, but that area didn't become an Achilles' heel and that will be the key for us."

"The most encouraging feature of our pre-Christmas international programme was probably Wales' match with South Africa. Although technically Wales weren't good enough to achieve what they set out to do, they were trying to create positions they could play from."

"There has been no criticism of England in those set-pieces areas over the past few seasons, but it's what happens afterwards that matters, at the breakdown, the

movement of players around the breakdown and from it. England have had difficulty in changing. They tend to be the most structured of sides, but, in South Africa, once the set-pieces are right, we will want to deconstruct the game and produce fluid situations. I hope we will see this evolving in the five nations' series, see more happening away from the set-pieces, quality decision-making and quality play."

That is an optimistic outlook, given the introverted nature of the five nations' and the limited experience of many of those who will be playing in it. But McGeechan would rather have glorious failure than win a restricted series by the odd penalty goal.

That is necessary both for the development of his players as all-rounders and for the wellbeing of the international game. It may be anathema to national coaches, but the Lions selectors will not object to the home unions losing games in the five nations' championship, so

long as they are seen to be striving for the ideal.

"There are a number of players who have done themselves no harm by the way they are playing at club level," McGeechan said. Though he will not name names at this juncture, he will have been heartened by the consistency, month by month and year by year, of players such as Martin Johnson, the Leicester lock, who has shown



Johnson: consistent

that he has the mentality to battle through a tour itinerary that McGeechan describes as the equivalent of ten five nations' games and three World Cup finals.

The odd outstanding five nations' appearance will make a potential Lions must be able to call up outstanding form on each of the four weekends if they are to be in the roll-call by the end of March. Some of the pieces seem already to be in place: Robert Howley, of Wales, must have booked one of the scrum half berths, Gregor Townsend, of Scotland, one of those at stand-off half, while Keith Wood, the Ireland captain, is a frontrunner for a hooking spot.

Genuine quality, however, is thin. If England, through weight of playing numbers, expect to provide the core of the side, they will have to improve on form so far. The five nations is frequently the making of Scotland, while Ireland, against Italy on Saturday, and Wales, against the United States on January 11, have yet more preparation before the opening weekend of the championship, on January 18. If McGeechan has his fingers crossed at this stage, who could blame him?

RUGBY LEAGUE

Lydon ends period of distinction at Wigan

By Christopher Irvine

ON THE field, in the dressing-room and, latterly, in the office at Central Park, in his role as football manager at Wigan, Joe Lydon was an inspirational figure and the consummate professional. His decision to leave yesterday was not easy after an 11-year association with the club.

Lydon's time at Wigan covered the most successful period in the club's history. As player, assistant coach and manager, Lydon's input was always significant and his resignation, tendered at the expiry of his present contract, was accepted reluctantly after lengthy discussions with Jack Robinson, the Wigan chairman.

"It's been very amicable, something we talked about for a while," Lydon said. "I just needed to take a step away from Wigan and from rugby league for a few weeks to consider my options."

Interest has been shown by several rugby union clubs in Lydon. He helped to coach the North division last season. His farewell appearance for Wigan was at Twickenham last May in the second cross-code match against Bath. Nonetheless, his future is thought to lie in league, possibly at Leeds in succession to Hugh McGahan as football manager.

The second challenge match at St Helens today — weather permitting — will be the first Lydon has played no part in since he signed for Wigan from Widnes, in 1986, and became league's first £100,000

transfer. He won every domestic honour and made 30 appearances for Great Britain. Speed was his prime asset, and accounted for two of the best tries seen at Wembley, in the 1984 Challenge Cup final for Widnes against Wigan.

Robinson praised Lydon's ambassadorial qualities and regretted his departure. The football manager's post set up for Lydon will remain unfilled. "I am proud to have played my part as player, coach and manager at a club that has gained so much success," Lydon said.

A youthful Wigan side is again at half-strength for the return fixture at St Helens. The Knowsley Road pitch is subject to a further inspection at 9am. The surface was deemed playable yesterday and is covered by protective sheeting. Conditions overnight will dictate whether the match goes ahead. Heavy snow yesterday accounted for the other matches scheduled for today, at Keighley and Dewsbury, which have been rearranged for Sunday.

Nigel Wright, who missed Wigan's 32-22 win in the first leg, last Thursday, is over his flu and is on the substitutes' bench. He is the one change to Wigan's line-up. Kris Radlinski, scorer of three tries in the first match, Stephen Holgate, Daryl Cardiss and Gael Tait have all recovered from minor injuries.

Bobbie Goulding's return from a back injury gives added substance to a strong St Helens back line. His partner at half back is Paul Anderson, normally a forward, whose full debut follows the big impact that he made on the recent Great Britain Academy tour of New Zealand. The versatile Andy Northey fills in at hooker for the first time, as Keiron Cunningham is still sidelined after a knee operation.

Leeds, who this week completed their strong overseas player quota, have acquired Rudi Meir, an Australian skills coach, who is joining them on a six-month secondment from Southern Cross University. He had a short spell at Wigan during 1995.



Lydon: significant input



Philippoussis, of Australia, follows through on his powerful service on his way to a Hopman Cup victory over Forget, of France

TENNIS

El Sawy is next in line for Henman

By Our Sports Staff

TIM HENMAN, the leading British player, must believe that fortune is on his side, for he has begun his 1997 campaign on a gentle note. Having beaten Herbert Wiltschko, an Austrian qualifier, 6-3, 6-2 in the first round of the Qatar Open yesterday, Henman now has to meet another qualifier, Tamer El Sawy, the Egyptian No 1 in the second round today.

Henman beat El Sawy 6-7, 6-2, 6-2 in a dead Davis Cup rubber at Wimbledon on grass in September and, if he repeats that win on the Qatar hard courts, he will go through to the quarter-finals without meeting a player who received direct entry into the main draw.

Although El Sawy is ranked only No 149 in the world, as against Henman's No 29, he was good enough to beat Jan Siemink, of Holland, the No 3 seed who is No 15 in the world, 6-3, 6-7, 7-6 in the first round.

Earlier, El Sawy had beaten Jamie Delgado, of Great Britain, Henman's great friend and former doubles partner, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 in the final qualifying round.

Michael Stich, the former

Wimbledon champion, playing his first match since he was beaten by Henman in the first round of the Grand Slam Cup in Munich last month, lost to Sergi Bruguera, of Spain, 6-3, 6-4 yesterday and described the defeat as the worst match he had played in a decade.

Thomas Muster, of Austria, the No 1 seed, reached the second round with a 7-5, 6-4 win over Hernan Gumy, of Argentina, and Petr Korda, of the Czech Republic, the defending champion, had a 6-4, 6-2 victory over Stephane Simian, of France.

Mark Philippoussis unleashed 57 aces as he completed successive singles and doubles victories yesterday to lift Australia to a 2-1 win over France, the No 4 seeds, in the Hopman Cup mixed teams' championship at the Burswood Centre in Perth.

Philippoussis defeated Guy Forget 7-6, 6-2 in the men's singles and then combined with the veteran, Nicole Pietrangeli, to win a tense mixed doubles 7-6 against Forget and Marie Perle. France had earlier taken the lead when Pierre beat Bradtkie 7-6, 6-1 in the women's singles.

SAILING

Blyth believes Challenge fleet has split into two divisions

By Edward Gorman, Sailing Correspondent

THE BT Global Challenge fleet has now sailed the best part of 12,000 miles over two legs to New Zealand. There are still 20,000 more miles to sail before the race is won, yet the class acts in the field have already asserted themselves.

The top boats, which arrived in Wellington at the head of the fleet on Monday, are Group 4, under Mike Golding, Toshiba Wave Warrior, under Simon Walker, and Save The Children, under the command of Andy Hindley, the former training skipper for crew volunteers in the race.

Those three have achieved remarkably close overall times for the two legs and have drawn well away from Mark Lodge's *Motorola*, the next boat. When times for both legs are taken together, Golding has a 16-hour advantage over Walker, who in turn has just five hours over Hindley. Then there is a big gap to Lodge, who is 36 hours behind Hindley and 57 adrift of Golding.

Lodge can expect his time to be improved somewhat after time taken refuelling the dismasted *Concert*. There is no doubt

that, had she not been dismasted and demoted to the back of the fleet for the second leg, *Concert* would also be in the top echelon. "There are two bunches," Chay Blyth, the race director said, "the ones who want to race and the ones who want to get round. The ones who want to race are very competitive. I think it might change on the next leg [1,500 miles from Wellington to Sydney] because it will be a bit of a sprint and the backmarkers will probably stay with the leaders."

Latest positions 24

Blyth is thrilled by the closeness of the racing at the front of the fleet and argues that his volunteers should be taken seriously by many in the racing fraternity in Great Britain.

"If you look at *Save The Children* and *Group 4*, for example," he said, "they actually crossed tacks at the waypoint right in the middle of the ocean. The racing is hard and very competitive. I think the word 'amateur' in this

context has to be redefined."

Motorola was the first of three finishers yesterday, in fourth place for the leg. Nine hours after her, *Global Team* work got in after a frustrating wait for a breeze, followed by *Commercial Union*, whose crew quickly joined in the huge New Year's Eve party under way at Queen's Wharf.

For Kit Harrison, 23, a crew member on *Teamwork*, the last day racing into Wellington and the arrival in Lambton Harbour have been the highlight of the race so far.

"Racing down the coast, we were in tune as never before," he said. "Every manoeuvre worked fantastically well. As soon as we docked, we were handed a crate of beer, steak sandwiches, fish and chips, fresh fruit and strawberries."

The backmarkers, meanwhile, were feeling the effects of hurricane Fergus, with *Time & Tide*, 30Com, and *Courtauld International* and *Heath Insured II* reporting horrendous conditions. The disabled crew on *Time & Tide* were beating into 56 knots of wind with waves sweeping the deck and the cockpit flooding regularly.

RUGBY UNION

Ashton and Bath yet to resolve differences

By David Hands, Rugby Correspondent

BATH players will start the new year as they finished the old — uncertain about the future of Brian Ashton, their chief coach. The league game with Saracens on Saturday will be the third weekend since Ashton's future with the club was called into question, though yesterday there were further discussions involving him and Tony Swift, the club chairman.

"We are hoping the situation will be resolved in the very near future," Swift — a pupil of Ashton's when both were living in the North West — said last night.

Bath must hope to arrive at a position where they can harness Ashton's considerable coaching talents and the organisational qualities that John Hall has brought, as team manager and subsequently as director of rugby.

There are said to have been differences of opinion between the men which have led to the present impasse. Meanwhile, Andy Robinson, helped by Ged Roddy, has been preparing the team which, against Saracens, remains without the injured Mike Catt.

David Young, the Wales prop, will miss Cardiff's Heineken Cup semi-final with Brive on Sunday and, in all probability, the international with the United States in Cardiff on January 11, the team for which will be named tomorrow. Young damaged a shoulder against South Africa last month.

With two other international props available — Andrew Lewis and Lyndon Mui — Cardiff should not go short-handed to France. Mui, who has withdrawn from the game today at the Arms Park between Emerging Wales and a United States XV, who, if the bitter weather continues, are likely to play all four of their tour matches in Cardiff, where undersea heating offers insurance against the weather.

That is one of the main headaches for the Heineken Cup organisers, who cannot afford any postponement. They have asked Leicester and Brive, the host clubs this weekend, to ensure that they have adequate pitch cover, and have blowners available so that the games can go ahead. Leicester, where there was heavy snow yesterday, will install heating today and are optimistic that their semi-final with Toulouse will proceed.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Football									
National League									
First division									
(1) Barnsley v Oldham	P	(11) Bolton v Bradford	P	(21) Brentford v Wycombe	P	(31) Colchester v Leyton Orient	P	(41) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
(2) Bolton v Oldham	P	(12) Charlton v Ipswich	P	(22) Bristol Rovers v Plymouth	P	(32) Darlington v Carlisle	P	(42) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
(3) Charlton v Ipswich	P	(13) Crystal Palace v Reading	P	(23) Burnley v Luton	P	(33) Exeter v Barnet	P	(43) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
(4) Derby v Sheffield Wednesday	P	(14) Huddersfield v Stoke	P	(24) Crawley v Millwall	P	(34) Hartlepool v Hull	P	(44) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
(5) Everton v Blackpool (5.45)	P	(15) Luton v Portsmouth	P	(25) Luton v Bury	P	(35) Lincoln v Wigan	P	(45) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
(6) Leicester v Tottenham	P	(16) Northampton v Reading	P	(26) Northampton v Reading	P	(36) Mansfield v Rotherham	P	(46) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
(7) Manchester United v Aston Villa (8.0)	P	(17) Port Vale v Southend	P	(27) Peterborough v Watford	P	(37) Macclesfield v Rotherham	P	(47) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
(8) Newcastle v Liverpool	P	(18) Sheffield Wednesday v Wolves	P	(28) Rotherham v Gillingham	P	(38) Notts County v Rotherham	P	(48) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
(9) Southampton v Wimbledon	P	(19) Sheffield Wednesday v Wolves	P	(29) Stevenage v Blackpool	P	(39) Southend v Chesham	P	(49) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
(10) West Ham v Nottingham Forest	P	(20) West Bromwich v Tranmere	P	(30) Stevenage v Blackpool	P	(40) Torquay v Shrewsbury	P	(50) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
Second division									
(1) Barnsley v Oldham	P	(11) Bolton v Bradford	P	(21) Brentford v Wycombe	P	(31) Colchester v Leyton Orient	P	(41) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
(2) Bolton v Oldham	P	(12) Charlton v Ipswich	P	(22) Bristol Rovers v Plymouth	P	(32) Darlington v Carlisle	P	(42) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
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(10) West Ham v Nottingham Forest	P	(20) West Bromwich v Tranmere	P	(30) Stevenage v Blackpool	P	(40) Torquay v Shrewsbury	P	(50) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
Third division									
(1) Barnsley v Oldham	P	(11) Bolton v Bradford	P	(21) Brentford v Wycombe	P	(31) Colchester v Leyton Orient	P	(41) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
(2) Bolton v Oldham	P	(12) Charlton v Ipswich	P	(22) Bristol Rovers v Plymouth	P	(32) Darlington v Carlisle	P	(42) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
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(10) West Ham v Nottingham Forest	P	(20) West Bromwich v Tranmere	P	(30) Stevenage v Blackpool	P	(40) Torquay v Shrewsbury	P	(50) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
Fourth division									
(1) Barnsley v Oldham	P	(11) Bolton v Bradford	P	(21) Brentford v Wycombe	P	(31) Colchester v Leyton Orient	P	(41) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
(2) Bolton v Oldham	P	(12) Charlton v Ipswich	P	(22) Bristol Rovers v Plymouth	P	(32) Darlington v Carlisle	P	(42) Doncaster v Gillingham	P
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Andrew Longmore finds a confident team leader in good spirits

Nicholls matches ambition with ability

Paul Nicholls looked a little the worse for wear, something to do with the stable Christmas party and a flirtation with the karaoke machine, but his enthusiasm on a grey morning remained undimmed. "We had a good night, but, do you know, everyone was in here by 6.30 this morning," he said as the familiar hollow click of hoof on concrete heralded first lot and one by one the revellers blinked into the misty light to begin their dawn rituals.

The sight of so many good horses provides the ideal cure for a hangover and by the time Nicholls has dispatched his front-line troops onto the gallops above the picture-postcard Somerset village of Ditchford, he was in full flow.

In the tight little world of racing, the word is out that a young and gifted rider has emerged from Lorna Doone country with an assembly of jumping talent to match the best in the land.

In only his fifth season in business, Nicholls is lying fifth in the trainers' championship and his yard hums with ambition and vigour. This is a young team moulded in the image of its confident and jovial leader. "There is too much doom and gloom in racing," Nicholls said. "People should concentrate on getting on and enjoying it."

Nicholls has been more frustrated than most by the Christmas freeze. His horses were primed and ready for an assault on the big prizes, but one by one his hopes were thwarted by the weather or the going. The promising novice chaser, See More Business, was withdrawn from Kempton's Boxing Day meeting, but the biggest blow was the abandonment of the Welsh National, for which Nicholls King was a strong favourite.

Nicholls has high hopes for Belmont King, a young chaser of impeccable temperament and unlimited potential, whose comeback victory at Cheltenham, after nearly two years away with a leg injury, opened up all manner of conquests. That victory,



Nicholls keeps a watchful eye on his string during morning exercise on his scenic Somerset gallops. Photograph: David Howells

Nicholls said, was the most satisfying of his career, a reward for the patience of Mrs Billie Bond, the 72-year-old owner, and an emphatic confirmation of his own relaxed yet rhythmic training methods. "Few horses leave Nicholls's yard for a gentle day out."

"I worked it out when I was riding," he said. "It was incredible the number of horses who were unfit. Pipe was winning everything because his horses were fit. I don't see the point in giving horses a run just for the sake of it. I want to send them out first time fit enough to win, but with room for improvement."

Nicholls would be the first to admit that his timing has been fortunate. An advertisement in *The Sporting Life* at the end of 1991 coincided with the end of his perennial battle against weight as a National Hunt jockey. This brought him to Manor Farm Stables, owned by Paul Barber, a dairy farmer, one of whose two ambitions — to milk 1,000 cows and win the Gold Cup — matched his own. "As soon as I saw the gallops I was up here like a shot," he recalled. "I couldn't believe it."

The first horse they bought was See More Indians, a highly talented young chaser, whose life was cut short. Nicholls's first winner as a trainer,

Olveston, on December 23, 1991, was owned by his parents. From there, the chart has shown a steady progression: ten winners in his first season, then 20, 33 last year and already 35 this season, the majority guided home by the champion, Tony McCoy, whose own drive has fused perfectly with Nicholls's. "As soon as I saw him I thought: 'this boy's good'. He was just like Dunwoody. He's good at schooling, he's very determined and he's good on the racetrack. He is in a different league from me as a jockey."

At the age of 34, Nicholls

has already defied convention by making an effortless leap into the top ranks of trainers. "I've got a super yard, super staff. I'm much more relaxed about it now and I'm doing the job better. Sometimes in those early days, I was trying too hard. I said I would give it five years, but I never thought I would fail. I've always wanted to be a trainer and I'm very determined."

Nicholls has been in the game long enough to beware complacency, but the future looks bright and not just because all 52 boxes in the yard are full and plans to expand to 75 are already in

hand. Belmont King is being aimed for the Grand National, but Nicholls has backed him each-way at 50-1 for the Gold Cup, just in case.

"People are always writing about the 'ever ambitious Paul Nicholls and stuff like that. But you've got to be ambitious. If you train with a positive attitude, your horses will have a positive attitude."

Meanwhile, Belmont King has more important duties, carrying Nicholls's pregnant wife, Bridget, safely through morning gallops. The baby is due in June, adding to the unmistakable air of expectancy hanging over the Nicholls yard in the new year.

Elimination of suspects points to White Willow

By RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

THE best way to find the winner of a race is first to identify the losers — and that task is often easier on the all-weather because of the high percentage of horses who never trouble the judge.

At Southwell this afternoon, the Thinking & Drinking Handicap (2.40) is a case where the process of elimination points back to the right direction. Starting from the bottom of the handicap, it is likely to start favourite for the first and more competitive division of the Resolution Claiming Stakes (12.35). However, the tough nine-year-old is arguably best over a mile at Southwell and may just lack the necessary pace here.

Hunting Ground won five races on turf in 1993 but has never run at Southwell and has been off the course for 910 days. Record Lover won

— so he should be fit. Just as important, he defied a big weight in a handicap on his only start at Southwell in 1994 and recorded a performance a stone better than any of his rivals have achieved. White Willow, the mount of Seb Sanders, should be able to run his opponents into the ground.

High Premium, the winner of five races last year including three on the all-weather, is likely to start favourite for the first and more competitive division of the Resolution Claiming Stakes (12.35). However, the tough nine-year-old is arguably best over a mile at Southwell and may just lack the necessary pace here.

In contrast, Standown has looked as though a return to seven furlongs would suit in his two most recent runs, notably when staying on at Wolverhampton 15 days ago. He could offer some value.

The New Year Handicap (3.40) hardly oozes quality and is best judged by the comments of David Barron after he sent out Fast Spin to win a seller at Southwell five days ago. "He's a bad horse running in a bad race," he said.

Fast Spin is not without a chance of following up in a mediocre effort but may have to give best to As-Is, who is representing the Mark Johnston-Jason Weaver combination. He should appreciate this mile trip on his all-weather debut.

Sharp Command is moderate and ran a stinker last time. Master Foodbroker is lightly raced and untried, while Tee Tee Too, far from sure to see out this trip, is harshly weighted for a horse who has not won since 1994. All of which leaves White Willow.

The eight-year-old was claimed out of Mary Reveley's yard after comfortably winning a hurdle race at Newcastle just 16 days ago

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: WHITE WILLOW (2.40 Southwell)
Next Best: Standown (12.35 Southwell)

a weakly contested amateur riders' race over course and distance a year ago but is out of form and without a run for eight weeks. Elite Bliss, another maiden, did produce an improved effort when stepped up in trip last time and is weighted to reverse form with the winner, Golden Hader, but this is a better class race.

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JULIAN HERRBERT



Rasayel, left, rounds the home turn to win on the Equirack at Lingfield yesterday, the only meeting to survive

Musselburgh holds strongest hopes

MUSSELBURGH on Saturday looks the most likely venue for a resumption of the jumping programme. Turf racing has not taken place in Britain since the Scottish track's card last Friday and prospects for the remainder of this week are bleak.

Mark Kershaw, the course manager at Musselburgh, reported yesterday: "I would not put it as strongly as to say it is promising, but, though we have had a slight frost and a dusting of snow, nothing has got into the ground. It looks like it will be cold, but not severe, so there must be a chance."

The all-weather card at Southwell is the only surviving fixture today. The scheduled jumps meetings at Cheltenham, Catterick, Exeter, Leicester, Windsor and Uttoxeter had all been called off by noon yesterday.

Tomorrow's cards at Ayr and Market Rasen have also fallen. "Siberian weather conditions look like staying until the weekend at least," Charlie Moore, the

clerk of the course at Market Rasen, said. At Ayr, a spokesman said after a 3.00pm inspection yesterday: "The temperature has not risen above zero all day."

On Friday, the jumps meetings at Lingfield, Sedgefield and Towcester all report frost and snow. Local forecasts suggest there is little chance of a thaw.

Matters look no better on Saturday.

PROSPECTS

TOMORROW'S MEETINGS

LINGFIELD PARK: all-weather meeting
AYR: abandoned
MARKET RASEN: abandoned
FRIDAY
LINGFIELD PARK: frozen
SEDFIELD: frost and snow
SOUTHWELL: all-weather meeting
TOWCESTER: frozen
SATURDAY
SANDOWN: partly frozen (inspection today)
WARWICK: frozen (inspection today)

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Lingfield Park

Going: standard
12.55 (1m 5f), 1. RASAYEL (Anthony Bond, 4-1), 2. Broomfield (Anthony Bond, 5-1), 3. More Than You Know (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 4. ALSO RAN 100-30 (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 5. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 6. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 7. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 8. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 9. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 10. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 11. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 12. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 13. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 14. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 15. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 16. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 17. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 18. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 19. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 20. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 21. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 22. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 23. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 24. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 25. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 26. The Electric (Jenny Joyce, 12-1), 27. 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Tribulations of Euro presidency demand Dutch courage

A KING-SIZE headache settled on the Dutch Government today, with little chance of relief for another six months. The ailment, otherwise called the presidency of the European Union, is a drain on smaller states at the best of times, but The Netherlands' latest bout comes with complications.

Taking over the rotating honour from Ireland, the centre-left Government of Wim Kok must extract enough consensus from a malaise-stricken EU to deliver a new version of the Maastricht treaty in Amsterdam next June. With little accord among the 15 members on how to revamp the Union for enlargement, the job would be galling enough without the imminent British election.

At the same time, the Dutch, among the more fervent of EU members, must prevent wobbling in the far more ambi-

tious project for monetary union as the candidates struggle to pass the year-long entrance exam which also opens today. Membership of the currency club will be awarded in spring next year on the basis of economic performance in 1997. To the dismay of monetary union enthusiasts, Britain will then hold the EU chair.

The Netherlands is still suffering from the hangover from its last time in the chair, in 1991, when it poured its federalist dreams into a draft of the Maastricht treaty which was then rejected by all the others. Mr Kok's team are now vying with each other to set low expectations. Hans van Mierlo, the integration-minded Foreign Minister, is playing presidential hopes in the minor key. "I would call it sobriety in difficult times," he said.

Like Klaus Kinkel, the German Foreign Minister, who stepped into the British

The leaders of The Netherlands were left reeling the last time they were at the EU helm, Charles Bremner writes from Brussels. They believe that the next six months back in the job will demand "sobriety in difficult times"

Euro-agony this week, Mr van Mierlo makes no bones about the implications of the British elections.

He is worried that Labour will fight with the Conservatives on Eurosceptic territory, limiting London's scope for negotiation in the weeks after the election. "If the European question is used negatively to win a maximum number of votes, it will be difficult to conclude a good treaty," he said. Like many of their colleagues across the EU, Dutch officials

are privately hoping for a Tony Blair government. They do not imagine a Europhile revival from Labour and they share the conventional wisdom that a Blair administration would stay out of monetary union at the outset. But they believe that it would give enough ground on such issues as the national veto to get the "Maastricht II" treaty onto paper. The job may still, they acknowledge, have to be handed over to the Luxembourg presidency for completion in the autumn.

The "British problem" barely masks the discord among the rest over the big questions that are still nowhere near agreement despite nine months of treaty talks at the inter-governmental conference (IGC). These range from curbing the veto and centralising control over frontiers and foreign policy to revamping the commission and giving more power to the European Parliament.

Dispute over the Commission pits the smaller states, who want to keep their right to a seat in the Brussels executive, against the big ones which say the consequent jumbo commission would be a fiasco when the EU soon adds new members from the old communist bloc.

Under its mercurial Gaullist President, France is causing as much anxiety among the Dutch as Britain. Jacques Chirac has been running a feud with Mr Kok over

The Netherlands' liberal drug laws since he took office and he could force the issue as the EU tries to harmonise crime and frontier policy at the IGC. President Chirac picked a new fight at last month's Dublin summit by signalling reluctance to endorse the widely expected appointment of Wim Duisenberg, a Dutchman, as chief of the European Central Bank, the future custodian of the single currency.

Beyond the Chirac quarrels, the Dutch, like many others, believe that the fate of monetary union and the push for integration will be fixed by events in France. In the climate of deep despair there over unemployment and the fate of the Gallic soul, France, it is feared, could turn against the goals of Maastricht and untangle the partnership with Germany that drives the whole EU.



Milosevic "cannot risk renewed sanctions"

'Bucharest scenario' warning to Milosevic

FROM ANTHONY LOYD IN BELGRADE

THE Government of President Milosevic of Serbia showed no sign of backing down to pro-democracy demonstrators in Belgrade yesterday, despite facing one of the largest crowds seen in the capital during 42 days of protest.

Tens of thousands of anti-government Serbs jammed the snowbound streets of Belgrade in a candlelit procession to protest against municipal election results that Mr Milosevic reversed in November.

Riot police remained on the streets in strength and reports that the administration was willing to compromise with recommendations by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, recognising the victory of opposition candidates in some municipalities, were soon discounted.

Vuk Draskovic, the opposition leader, said that Mr Milosevic faced a stark choice if he continued with repressive policies. "We [opposition MPs] would have no option but to give back all our political mandates. Milosevic would face international sanctions once more and then what would happen? There are already a million unemployed hungry Serbs here. Milosevic would face rioting around Serbia and disaster."

Mr Draskovic added: "He can choose our option and recognise our victory, or face the Bucharest scenario" — a reference to the violent fall of the Ceausescu regime.

Claxons, bands and whistles echoed around Belgrade, along with the sound of hundreds of chiming clocks, brought out by the demonstrators to toll symbolically for Mr Milosevic.

One elderly man said: "I am protesting here, and so is my son. We are prepared to see this through until the end so that our children will not find themselves as I do now, old and still demonstrating."

Iran cash funded Bosnian election victory, says CIA

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

THE CIA was reported yesterday to have evidence that Iran secretly delivered at least half a million dollars in cash to the President of Bosnia before last September's election.

The agency has discovered that the Iranians gave Alija Izetbegovic, a fellow Muslim, at least two pieces of luggage each stuffed with \$250,000 (£150,000) to help to pay for his victorious campaign, the report said.

The CIA believes that Mr Izetbegovic has been "co-opted by the Iranians" and is now "literally on their payroll", according to a classified report based on the agency's analysis of the issue obtained by the *Los Angeles Times*. Yet President Clinton agreed to release \$100 million in American military aid to Bosnia in November even after the CIA uncovered the Iranian payments and reported the information to his policy-makers, the report said.

Mr Clinton had delayed the aid for months because of concerns about Iranian influence in Bosnia. He let it go ahead only after deciding that the Bosnians had yielded to US demands for the withdrawal of foreign fighters sponsored by Tehran and had sacked Hasan Cengic, the Deputy Defence Minister, because of his links to Iran.

One US official conceded that the Iranian cash payments to Mr Izetbegovic "gave us pause" and he was quietly told that they were "unacceptable". But Mr Clinton decided they were insufficiently serious to halt the flow of US helicopters, tanks, rifles and other military supplies intended to equip and train a restructured Bosnian army. Money for the programme had been pushed through Congress by Bob Dole before he resigned as Republican Senate leader to run for the presidency.

Still, the Iranian influence in Bosnia remains a vexing problem and the CIA and others in Washington are not convinced it has dwindled as much as the Clinton Administration would like to believe.

According to yesterday's report, electronic eavesdroppers and code-breakers at the National Security Agency reported as recently as September that, despite terms agreed in the Dayton peace accords, members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard remained active throughout Bosnia. The CIA reportedly blames Mr Clinton for encouraging the involvement in Bosnia of Iran, which Washington treats as a pariah nation for its sponsorship of international terrorism. He sanctioned Iranian arms shipments to Bosnia to

save the Government from collapse in April 1994 when Western weapons deliveries were blocked.

The CIA estimates that the Iranians smuggled in about 14,000 tonnes between then and now, at least double the estimates made public by the State Department. Iranian Revolutionary Guard fighters and trainers poured into the country, doubling their presence to 400 or more.

A senior CIA official was quoted as telling Congress in a secret deposition that the policy of allowing arms into Bosnia was of great assistance in enabling the Iranians to dig in and establish good relations with the Bosnian Government. Americans would live to regret the policy when their troops were blown up "as they no doubt will be before this thing is over", the official said.

The report said that the dismissal of Mr Cengic had done little to reduce Iran's influence. Officials said at least one member of the Bosnian Muslim Cabinet was an agent of the Iranian intelligence service, according to the classified documents.

□ Sarajevo: Bosnian Serbs, seeking to bolster their claims to statehood, are holding up mail destined for Serb-controlled territory, it was reported. (Reuters)



Jorge de Jesus Ruiz threatens Cecilia Velázquez, a bank branch manager, during a police siege after his failed robbery attempt in Mexico City on Monday. After getting into a car with two hostages, Ruiz shot himself dead

Polish resort loses allure as big spenders go West

FROM ROGER BOYES IN ZAKOPANE, SOUTHERN POLAND

KROPOWKI Street in Zakopane glitters with all the authenticity of costume jewellery. The boutiques in this Polish mountain resort are full of sparkling, studded designer dresses and the shops are a match for Vienna or Baden Baden. But, as Jerzy Iwaskiewicz, a writer, says: "Beyond the high street and the tidy wooden chalets, Zakopane is going broke."

The wealthy of Central Europe are flourishing, but their riches are moving westwards and the traditional playgrounds of the rich are beginning to look a little faded. This is important because it was always assumed that the capitalist revolution would see prosperity trickle down from on high. Only that made palatable the great yawning gap between the new rich and the new poor.

There are beggars in the streets, Aids victims and

homeless people, and there are scented women swaddled in mink stepping out of dark-windowed limousines. In this sense Polish cities are indistinguishable from London or New York.

But in Central Europe they have had to discard half a century of egalitarian propaganda and it still smarts that a New Year's Eve party in a Warsaw hotel can cost the equivalent of a doctor's monthly wage. A reporter making a new year round of shops in Warsaw was horrified to find a party dress priced at over \$800. She made her excuses, she says, and left.

Zakopane, high in the Tatra mountains, was the St Moritz of the Warsaw Pact. The finer slopes may have been on the Slovak side of the border, but the Poles understood how to make a commercial magnet out of this small, charming village of goatherds and dog breeders.

Even under the communists, Kropowki Street became a place to flaunt Italian sun-

glasses and designer ski suits. Some of the wealthy roughed it, staying with richly rewarded local families, but nonetheless held their antic après ski parties in the luxurious Kasprowy Hotel perched above the village.

Under communism there was private wealth, some of it legally acquired. Farming was in private hands and green-house owners, growing flowers or tomatoes, prospered. So did boutique owners, record producers, artists with overseas contracts, fashion designers, confectioners, silk manufacturers, money changers



and gynaecologists with private abortion facilities. Their social season could be charted easily: summer in the dachas around the Mazurian lakes, winter in Zakopane, parties in the Polish capital's renowned Architects' Club. In the most miserable days of martial law, when meat and sugar were rationed and laundry paper was a rarity, there were five Rolls-Royces purring around the country.

Now the world has changed and you notice it quickly in Zakopane. "The money has moved to the Alps," Iwaskiewicz, a long-time visitor to the resort, says. There are a few concessions to Western trends — young snowboarders in baggy trousers are in vogue — but on the whole Zakopane has lost its fizz. The wealthy of Central Europe see no point in spending their cash in the East. Increasingly they buy houses in Andalusia and Kensington and winter in South Africa or Gstaad, Switzerland. Zakopane prices remain out of reach of ordinary Poles and

even the educated middle classes who could find low-cost niches outside the resort are giving up or confining their trips to five days instead of a fortnight. It is a similar story in other resorts. Mragowo, an exclusive hotel in the Mazurian lakes, once an attraction for rich weekenders, is now dependent on German tourists searching nostalgically for what they regard as their lost lands.

After the revolutions of 1989-90, underground wealth edged above the surface. The 50 richest Poles, listed in 1991, included men (no women) with interests in meat processing, former racing drivers and sports stars who had managed to grab Western car dealerships, and building magnates. Now five years on, some of these people are in deep water.

The magazine *Sukces* this month lists 50 wealthy businessmen, starting with a property dealer accused of embezzling some hundreds of thousands of pounds, who have strayed from the straight

and narrow. The police are hunting for the absconding developer and five of the 50 are living abroad; 15 are under arrest. At least half a dozen of those mentioned on the "anti-list" were regarded five years ago as the winners rather than the villains of the capitalist revolution.

What has changed is that capitalism is becoming more staid in Central Europe and works increasingly within legal confines. In 1991, as in Russia today, the social equation in Central Europe was that wealth bought power. In 1997, the formula is that wealth buys respectability. A dozen private schools are well established in Poland, although there is an increasing trend for wealthy people to send their children to British public schools.

The great difference between the Polish rich of a decade ago and the rich of today is income tax: for the most part it is now paid without question as part of the price of upward mobility.

Veterans outraged by medals of dishonour

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

THE Pentagon has dropped America's principal maker of military decorations after the family-owned firm sold unauthorised copies of the nation's highest honour.

HLL, Lordship Industries, based in New York, produced 300 extra Medals of Honour for sale to collectors at \$75 (£45) each. The medal has been awarded 3,401 times for extraordinary valor in combat since its creation by Congress in 1861, mostly posthumously. Only 170 living servicemen possess the award. The maximum penalty for unauthorised wearing of the decoration was raised recently to a year in prison.

Lordship Industries had been the medal's sole authorised manufacturer since the late 1970s and its most recent contract was for 600 medals — but it made 900. The extras were discovered by an off-duty FBI agent, a former US Navy SEAL, who spotted a pair of

them on sale while browsing at a military memorabilia fair in New Jersey.

The company pleaded guilty to making false medals. Its lawyer admitted that two of the three brothers who ran the company had known about the unauthorised medals. "True Medal of Honour recipients and their families have a right to be outraged by their conduct," District Judge William Bassler said.

"It is a theft of our respect. It is a rape of our ideals," said Paul Bucha, a retired army captain and a president of the Congressional Medal of Honour Society, who earned his decoration in Vietnam.

Weakened Gingrich seeks new term

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

A DEFIANT Newt Gingrich has decided to seek re-election as Speaker of the House of Representatives next Tuesday, even if his punishment for ethics violations has not been decided by then.

The Republican leader's determination to run was announced yesterday as his allies strove to shore up support and Democrats continued to demand his resignation.

The Republican leadership organised a mass conference call for rank-and-file members to reinforce solidarity after one backbencher, Michael Forbes of New York, declared he would not vote for Mr Gingrich. A former Gingrich loyalist, he said dynamic leadership was needed at the start of the new Congress from someone who was not weakened by the ethics struggle.

At least ten other House Republicans have said they are unsure whether they will support Mr Gingrich. His closest advisers privately expect more defections but still believe he will survive. It would need 20 Republicans

out of 227 to abstain for him to be defeated.

Mr Gingrich himself, normally so loquacious, remained silent and out of sight as the struggle over his future raged. Columnists and editors have taken up both sides of the argument, with many noting it would be ironic for Mr Gingrich to be driven from office over one ethics issue while President Clinton, who faces investigations into sev-

eral alleged abuses of power, remains unscathed.

Twelve days ago Mr Gingrich acknowledged breaking House ethics rules by providing inaccurate information to investigators and failing to ensure that his televised college course complied with laws barring the use of tax-exempt charitable funds for a partisan political project.

Republican leaders immediately described the violation as no more than a

misdeed and confidently announced that Mr Gingrich would be re-elected as Speaker. In the meantime, they said, the ethics committee would meet to decide his punishment, which they implied would amount to no more than a slap on the wrist.

This plan has come partially unravelled. The ethics committee, evenly balanced between Republicans and Democrats, has been unable to schedule a quick meeting to dispose of the complaint.

Even worse for the Republicans, Jim McDermott, the committee's leading Democrat, has decreed that in spite of Mr Gingrich's admission of guilt, the matter cannot be dealt with in a matter of hours as the Speaker and his supporters had hoped.

Time will be needed for the four ethics members who carried out the investigation to brief the other six about the case. In short, the Democrats are determined that the committee's work will not be finished before the vote next Tuesday.



Mr Gingrich being sworn in for the first time in 1994

Diamond deal with Moscow loses glitter

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

ONE of the most enduring and extraordinary partnerships in modern Russian history formally came to a close last night when De Beers, the South African diamond company, terminated its contract to sell Russian diamonds on the world market.

In a move with potentially damaging effects on the price of diamonds, and the cartel controlled by De Beers, the company said that from today it would no longer recognise the contract to sell Russia's rough diamonds.

"From January our formal commitment falls away," said Raymond Clark, the De Beers representative in Moscow. He added that the company would continue to buy Russian diamonds, but outside the formal relationship which had endured for nearly 40 years.

Until yesterday, Russia's annual sale of diamonds, through De Beers' London-based Central Selling Organ-

isation, was valued at \$772 million, about one quarter of the cartel's annual sales.

De Beers was forced to act after months of largely fruitless negotiations with the Russian authorities on a new agreement. Under the old terms, Russia was supposed to sell 95 per cent of its gem-quality diamonds to De Beers. However, the South Africans became increasingly frustrated by the chaotic state of the Russian industry and claimed that substantial "leakages" of Russian stones were turning up on the world market.

The irony is that De Beers had a far more successful trading relationship with Moscow when the two sides were supposedly implacable ideological foes, with South Africa under white minority rule and the Kremlin controlled by the Communists.

Privately, industry analysts believe that a fresh agreement is possible.

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Beer to end
disgrace

Beer to end
disgrace

مكتبة الأصل

Supermodel Linda Evangelista finds the new MaxMara collection worth getting out of bed for, reports **Grace Bradberry**

Why Linda wears the trousers

In 1951, Achille Maramotti, an Italian lawyer, saw pictures of Audrey Hepburn in designs by the French couturier Hubert de Givenchy. Inspired by Hepburn's gamine elegance, and by the skill of his mother, who ran a professional sewing school, Maramotti decided to create his own fashion label.

The first collection consisted of one coat and two jackets, all three cut with clean lines. Nothing revolutionary, you might think, yet MaxMara was the first Italian fashion house to create ready-to-wear.

Today, of course, we are deluged by labels. MaxMara stands for the reverse of autocratic fashion culture. Even the label's most devoted customers do not know the name of the figure-head designer, and that is because there is no such person. In-house designers are guided by outside consultants, some of them big names. Karl Lagerfeld, for example, was a collaborator in the Seventies, and Dolce & Gabbana contributed in the Eighties. The names are never divulged at the time. The collections are intended to dovetail with women's lifestyles. They do not represent readymade lifestyles in the way that a Gucci outfit might.

This philosophy explains the number of "diffusion" lines. The MaxMara collection is aimed at working women looking for glamorous, well-cut clothes that will last for several seasons. They want their wardrobes to be recognisably modern, but not trendy. Then there are 22 other labels, of which the best known are Weekend by MaxMara, Marella, I Blues, Sportmax and Pennyblack. About 17 are sold in Britain.

None of the labels is associated with a particular film star, or celebrity. Women as diverse as Isabella Rossellini and Liv Ullmann, the young star of the Bertolucci film *Stealing Beauty*, have been seen wearing mainline MaxMara. Luigi Maramotti, son of Achille, and the company's managing director, has remarked that he would rather see a picture of Rossellini passing through Milan airport in a MaxMara coat, than an actress standing up at the Oscars in a dress she has been sponsored to wear.

Swimming against the current fashion tide, MaxMara has also refused to go retro. The spring/summer 1997 collection contained most of the directional items included by other designers. There were wide-legged trouser suits, colonial-inspired jackets, tunic tops, asymmetrical neck-lines and abstract prints. But none had an obvious period feel. This was deliberate. "I don't think retro can work because nobody wants to look back, everyone wants to look into the future," Giorgio Guidotti, MaxMara's art director, says.



"We have a contemporary woman who travels and wants to be modern, to have a personality. She doesn't want to look like Evita one season and Cleopatra the next."

The advertising campaign, featuring Linda Evangelista photographed by Steven Meisel, is intended to reflect this. Evangelista was allowed to select her outfits. She fell in love with the trouser suits.

It is impossible to create images without some reference to the past, and in this case the inspiration was Louise Brooks and the Twenties. "But what we definitely didn't want was retro," says Guidotti — the distinction is between the past as a reference point, and as a pattern book. The self-conscious Seventies styling of some of the more cutting-edge designers is anathema to the MaxMara ethos.



Far left: cream short-sleeve Nehru-collar jacket and matching trousers, £408

Main picture: charcoal wool check tie jacket and trousers, £500

Left: navy double-breasted pin-striped tailored jacket £330 and matching trousers £120; navy shirt £38

Below: wine-red Nehru collar sleeveless silk shirt, £270; mulberry-coloured trousers, £321

Photographer: STEVEN MEISEL
Model: Linda Evangelista
Hair and make-up: Gärren and Lauren Mercier

MaxMara stockists:
32 Sloane Street, SW1, 0171-235 7941
153 New Bond Street, W1, 0171-481 4748
Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, 0171-235 5000
Harrods, Knightsbridge, 0171-730 1234
Selfridges, W1, 0171-629 1234
Matches, 37a High Street, Wimbledon, 0181-944 5366
Saks, 59-61 High Street, Tunbridge Wells

National inquiry number: 0171-287 3434



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A changing room of one's own

There are few times when a woman feels herself quite so much the victim of the consumer society as when she enters a high street changing room. Even in the more expensive stores, the conditions are frequently cramped, and offer little in the way of privacy.

Why is it that the curtains are never quite wide enough for the space? Why do the doors not meet the ceiling? And why are so many changing rooms without mirrors, forcing us to parade out in front of other people's husbands and boyfriends (and, if we're gluttons for punishment, our own)? As Virginia Woolf might have written had she shopped at Kookai, all one wants is a changing room of one's own. It's really no wonder that women become conspiracy theorists when it comes to changing rooms. If the mirrors aren't warped then the lighting is deceptive. Do I really look this good — or, more often, this bad? And if you can't find fault with either of those, then there's always the suspicion that the assistants are trained to harry people out before they notice the obvious design flaws.

Hugo Tugman, the architect behind several new shops, including the new Jigsaw Menswear in Manchester, is perplexed by the accusations of devious design: "One of the modern myths is that we've got it all worked out. It's a lot more based on gut feel."

Just to get the record straight, Tugman's changing rooms all contain mirrors, mounted flat against the wall with no attempt to distort the image. But not all his cubicles will be as private as the consumer might like, because while customers would doubleless like to change behind padlocked iron doors, retailers are into "permeability".

At the very least shop assistants want to know if there is anybody in there. If retailers think they can get away with it, they will deprive customers of individual mirrors. "There's always a debate about whether it's good to have them in the changing rooms," says Tugman. "Some retailers are very upfront and want to get at the customers.

That either means having them wander out, or making the doors so small you can peak over the top."

Men won't put up with the same degree of "permeability" as women. "The psychology of shopping is very different," explains Tugman. "Women are more automated. They want everything to be ordered. Men want something more relaxed and unstimulating."

In Jigsaw Menswear in Manchester the doors go from floor to ceiling, though they are constructed from vertical slats, angled to let the light in. "The assistants could tell if anyone was in there and could speak through the slats." But men have the luxury of being able to struggle into their trousers without someone flinging back a curtain to ask: "Everything all right in there?"

Only one minor deception has been practised on the men of Manchester: the ceiling is pink, and so a warm light diffuses the store. Many customers would doubtless recoil at the idea that they were seeing their clothes in rose-tinted mirrors, but apparently they don't notice.

What most of us crave, of course, is daylight. Tugman insists that architects simply cannot simulate this in a shop. "You and they make you look like death. Daylight is so powerful you can never recreate it with artificial light."

Instead, Tugman favours warm white lights — not so cold as to render one corpse-like, but not too cosy either: "It needs to look chic." And he never puts spotlights directly above the head. "Strong directional light can be very unpleasant."

More unpleasant than being in a changing room, however, is queuing for one, which explains why so few contain so much as a stool. No wonder some women now resort to the ruse of "unshopping" — buying several items hurriedly, then taking most of them back within the 14-day grace period.

GRACE BRADBERRY
STYLE EDITOR

THE TIMES

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مكتبة الأصل

A plea from the heart for 1997

I don't want riches, I don't want flash cars — I just want to be tidy

I don't believe in new year resolutions any more than I believe in Valentine's Day cards: if you need the impetus of an officially designated day to show either your resolve or your affection then neither can be worth registering. But this year I falter.

Today is the day I start being tidy. The fact that I decided this some two weeks ago, is, I do rather pathetically see, a sure sign of my own bad faith.

If I really were positive about changing my depressingly messy ways, I would have started clearing up as soon as I'd made the decision, rather than postulating it.

This is the trouble, though, with being a messy person. One feels so engulfed by impending chaos that even to begin to put a bit of order into one's life is frightening.

Tidying up requires that one throws oneself into the mess, and how can one hurl oneself into the abyss when even standing on the edge peering in is terrifying?

Not all messy people feel like that. Some don't even notice the squalor in which they live. Others actively prefer it. I, unfortunately, am a messy person who hates mess.

How hard, you may ask, can it be, then, to tidy up? But being messy is like being fat: those who consider themselves to have a weight problem know that the way to solve it is to eat less, but somehow in practice it doesn't feel that simple.

If, for example, I found it easy enough to tidy up, I wouldn't be so trapped in the mess of my own making now, just as those who have no trouble eating sensibly tend not to put on weight in the first place.

I think there is a further connection, notionally speaking, between being overweight and being messy. It's about control, or lack of it. However disparagingly we might speak about those rigorously disciplined people who exercise absolute control on themselves and their environment, we tend to admire them, in admittance, an envious fashion.

This is, after all, the age of the control freak, and even if there is something intimidating and rather un-cosy about the sort of person who never has a pound or a piece of paper out of place, it is an unconsciousness that has a confounding way

of looking like an accomplishment.

Why, then, on the other hand, inspires such loathing, out of proportion to any mere aesthetic dismay, is that it smacks of lack of restraint, of a dreaded incontinence. And it's the same with mess.

I've noticed that people who are tidy often draw attention to it in an awful-me sort of way, that implies that although they're paying lip-service to the notion of neatness as a neurosis, secretly they are pleased with their orderliness, and know we're impressed, too.

Victoria Wood, for example, can make jokes about being the sad sort of character who has to get her knicker drawer sorted and catalogued before she can do any work because the outcome of such obsessive behaviour is that everything will be tidy, and that is an uncontested good.

To go back to the fat-mess analogy I'd say that, in a similar way, we have more sympathy for anorexics than we do for compulsive eaters. Someone whose mental disorder shows itself in not eating at least gets thin (and I promise that's how a lot of people think: if it sounds mad, it may be, but still don't write to me as if it's what I think) but someone whose unhappiness makes them eat too much just gets fat, and that is where we lose sympathy. We're too appalled to be concerned.

But there it is: I have resolved this New Year's Day to shed several pounds' worth of scribbled-on envelopes, out-of-date press releases, shopping lists, phone messages and faxes — and this is just in my study. The rest of the house is groaning under the weight of old clothes, old letters and invitations (again), lost socks and a clutter so dispiriting even to contemplate, that I won't.

Tidying up is not alone the answer, I do see that. Experience has taught me that the relief is short-lived. A week or so after one of our sporadic blitzes, the piles start mounding up again.

What is needed is a personality change. That would be dangerous, of course. The dynamic works at present if only because I am married to someone messy enough to add to the confusion, to contribute

significantly to the hellishness of it all, but sufficiently unmessy to be able to take it all in hand occasionally and — much more important — to be able, always, to feel that the fault is really mine.

Just as relationships can founder when alcoholics dry out, so I wonder whether it would be dangerous to try to tidy up my act.

That, again, is a delaying tactic. But the trouble with being seriously untidy is that it is hard to see where to start. I will be able to answer my letters (and to those of you who have been good enough to write, I promise I will) once I've done my accounts. Or that's what I tell myself. And I'm going to do my accounts soon. Or that is what I tell my accountant.

Some weeks ago I mentioned, for some reason, that I wore the same thing to more or less every party I went to. I have come to the conclusion, after brutally honest reflection on the subject, that the real reason is probably because it's the only outfit I can lay my hands on. Most of my clothes lie in a black dusty fug at the bottom of the wardrobe, or are still in hopefully folded piles on top of the washing machine, waiting, in vain, to be ironed.

I don't think I am quite an irredeemable slob. I keep myself and my kitchen clean, but I need a great deal of help to keep the chaos at bay. I have come to the conclusion that my resolution to become a tidy person will be realised only if first I resolve rather energetically to become a rich one. If I had the money (and believe me, it would take a lot) I believe I could pay myself out of this mess.

I once went on holiday, to stay with friends who'd rented a house complete with a red-nude of staff. She cooked, her husband made drinks, and their niece did the cleaning, washing and ironing. Believe me, there wasn't the opportunity to be messy. I have never wanted a grand life, or to be rich, but now I can see the point. I don't want flash cars or clothes. I don't want several large houses and I don't want to go shopping all day (well, maybe just on some days) but what I would love is to have several people very well paid (I wouldn't want to exploit anyone, and the fair wage would have to be a large one) to look after me. And I mean look after: I need someone who can decide which drawer my tights should go in and then make it their life's work to keep them there.

In the meantime though, I do see, I am just going to have to go upstairs and tidy up — and I may be some time.

This problem is all about control, or at any rate about the lack of it



Nigella Lawson



Drowning in the rising tide of chaos — the only way to get yourself out of a mess such as this, Nigella Lawson believes, is to undergo a complete personality change

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When clothes make the man

I now have three identical scarves, all Christmas presents from my mother. They are no ordinary scarves. They are of double thick wool, with Viking runes on them, and they have bobbles at either end. I have long considered taking them back, but the Orkney Islands are a long way to go. Instead they take up an absurd amount of space. The idea of wearing them is inconceivable.

From time to time I have wondered why my mother has so completely failed to appreciate my innate good taste, persisting in giving me the kind of garb that is not only a sartorial disaster, but is so clearly not my style. I see myself as a rather raffish dresser, unconventional but elegant, with clothes that acknowledge fashion in an airy sort of way without ever being trapped by it. That at least is the intention.

True, I occasionally fall short of my own demanding standards. I remember one particular moment of disillusion when, as an undergraduate at Cambridge, I acquired an olive-green French corduroy jacket, edged in leather, which I wore with a black polo-neck and drab jeans — the last word in rive gauche chic. Jean-Paul Belmondo would have died for it. Glancing at myself in a shop

Gifts reveal your true self, Magnus Linklater says

window, I suddenly saw something rather appalling: a shambling figure with short, spindly legs, wearing what looked like an over-sized donkey-jacket — not so much Belmondo as Groucho Marx. I immediately cancelled all public appearances and sat down to reassess, not just my wardrobe but my life.

Nevertheless, there have been moments of triumph. One thinks instinctively of a certain brushed denim suit from John Stephen, circa 1965, so tight around the crotch one could only wear it for two hours. I believe they still talk of it at the Flamingo Club.

However, I digress. The point at issue is why my mother, who should know me reasonably well, has so misread my character. It could, of course, be simple eccentricity, or plain forgetfulness. She is, after all, 86, and might be forgiven for having acquired elements of both. Nevertheless, in all other respects she is as sharp as a knife. Instead I have begun to wonder whether there might be some kind of sub-Freudian message here. Perhaps she thinks that this is

really the person I am deep down. That inside this casual boulevardier with the Place St Michel swagger, there is a bubbly, muffled up, jolly, bucolic type trying to get out.

And then an even worse thought struck me. Perhaps she has sensed that this is the kind of person I am turning into anyway; perhaps she is merely helping to speed the process. I raced to my wardrobe to carry out an immediate audit. What I found there came as a nasty shock. I discovered, not one, but two blazers with shiny brass buttons. There was a pair of brown, clumpy shoes, looking distinctly sensible. A stout jacket made of Harris Tweed only just hid a pair of yellow corduroy trousers, with room for growth around the waist. There was a cloth cap, a golfing jersey. There was ... Oh God ... a cardigan.

That night I had a terrible dream. I was preparing to go out, and had donned my blazer, yellow corduroy trousers, clumpy shoes and cloth cap. I turned and saw a thick woollen scarf with Viking runes and large bobbles at either end. I felt instinctively that it was right for me. With a warm glow of pleasure I reached out to pick it up, and at that point, I woke up. And it was true.

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THEATRE 1

Jessica Lange triumphs in her West End debut, as Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*



THEATRE 2

But Yule Better Change, Michael McArdle's musical version of Scrooge, is a far from uplifting experience

THE TIMES ARTS



DANCE

The Royal Ballet celebrates the Christmas season in fine style with Ashton's *Cinderella*



RISING STAR

Not too long ago, Emily McKenzie was working as a waitress in Oxford Street. Now she's starring in a panto

THEATRE: A Blanche to remember from Jessica Lange; a night to forget with Scrooge and Bob Marley

Life in the killing jar

Tennessee Williams's stage directions say that Blanche DuBois, with her white dress and scattered manner, resembles a moth. He might more generously have compared the protagonist of his *Streetcar Named Desire* to a butterfly that has unwisely ventured into an aviary dominated by a bird of prey. Certainly that was the comparison that seemed best to sum up Jessica Lange's Blanche as she teetered on to the Haymarket stage last night and, her hands fluttering at her neck, her cheek and her forehead, proceeded to give a performance that combined vulnerability with a delicacy and intelligence not normally associated with moths.

Blanche is the most memorable member of the collection of dramatic characters Williams once called "my little company of the faded and frightened and difficult and odd and lonely". Like many of his people, she is in flight from reality and, like others, she is nostalgic for a South that, as Williams also said, "had grace, elegance and an inbred culture and was not a society based on money". But Belle Reve, as her family mansion was not inevitably called, has been mortgaged and drunk away. Now she has nowhere to take all her memories and dreams, fantasies and lies, but to her sister and brother-in-law's shabby apartment in the wrought-iron quarter of New Orleans.

With Toby Stephens's Stanley Kowalski sweetly embodying everything Belle Reve isn't, you never for a moment doubt that her visit will end in disaster. Peter Hall's production, although it falls sufficiently to acknowledge the heat of a Louisiana summer, sustains the proper tension and, when the climaxes come, achieves the necessary intensity.

But a second and even more interesting conflict is to be found within the war between faded gentility and urban brashness.

A Streetcar Named Desire

That is Blanche's battle with her own repressed yet irrepressible sexuality. Elia Kazan, the play's first director, went so far as to say that she was Williams's surreptitious portrait of himself: "An ambivalent figure attracted to the harshness and vulgarity around him at the same time that he fears it, because it threatens his life."

That was certainly true of Williams, a promiscuous homosexual who hated his own weakness for rough trade. It is less true of Lange. In the annual game of Musical Scrooges two colleagues carried off the Anthony Newley and Richard Briers versions, leaving me with Michael McArdle's. I cannot honestly say that his title (for he wrote, directs and plays the central role) led me to hope for a great deal from his enterprise. The prospect became bleaker on discovering that a coach party of 50 had postponed their booking, reducing the audience to five, equal to the size of the cast.

We scattered few did our best to impart some jollity to our responses, partly out of respect for the cast's courage but mainly to cheer ourselves up on a chilly evening fitfully warmed by the show's ersatz mirth. Possibly, though I would not be willing to take bets, a full house would make it all go with a zing.

The press release calls what McArdle has concocted a Magical Musical Comedy but the only magic occurred during the inter-

val, when from out of the ether two humans materialised and increased the audience to seven. Where could they have come from? I suspect one of them was Marilyn Monroe, or rather, the actress who played her in the first half and never reappeared, representing as Monroe does the Spirit of Christmas Past.

You will have guessed that this is no ordinary Christmas Carol. It has songs, also by McArdle, that allude to the work of others, mostly dead others: for instance, in one of the show's better jokes, Scrooge is visited by Bob Marley's Ghost — Joanna Robinson under a top-heavy Rasta bonnet and curtain of dreadlocks.

Mason Laird makes a decent stab at Buddy Holly, groping his way blindly along the scenery, but

he introduces a wretchedly written Cratchit scene, where Tiny Tim is played by a cardboard skeleton. Finally some familiar drumbeats bring us to *Also Sprach Elvis Presley* and the uplifting message of "You gotta live, you gotta love". Production values are frugally distributed, and there is little evidence of a feeling for character. The rock stars who try to melt Scrooge's flinty heart manage to make him jig along to their beat but, since what finally changes him is the sight of his own gravestone, they could have saved themselves most of their trouble.

I suppose the Fezziwig dance at the Bar Humbug is another goodish joke, which makes two in all. Dickens's book is a fable of great power: people cheapen, eviscerate or prettify it and cannot be stopped but their efforts should not be encouraged. This is rough and

laboured theatre.

JEREMY KINGSTON



"A performance that would not have disgraced Brando himself": Toby Stephens as Stanley Kowalski and Jessica Lange — "vulnerability combined with delicacy and intelligence" — as Blanche DuBois

Five in search of a laugh

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Yule Better Change

New End, NW3

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laboured theatre.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Winning team but a no-score draw

FLANDERS OPERA: Barry Millington brings the news from Antwerp and Ghent

FLANDERS Opera, which services two delightful houses in Ghent and Antwerp, has just commissioned its first opera. The subject is promising — Lacroix's *Les liaisons dangereuses* — and the story has been skillfully transferred from epistolary novel to lyric drama. Yet a question mark remains over the choice of composer: the Belgian Piet Swerts.

The process of recreating this classic of amatory intrigue on the stage was a protracted one in which three people, in addition to the composer, participated (more or less harmoniously): librettist Dirk Van der Cruyssen, conductor Patrick Davin and director Philippe Sireuil. Letter-writing, sensibly, features little, being replaced by flesh-and-

blood encounters informed by dialogue that is of necessity a drastic reduction of the original. And even if Jorge Jara's stunning array of period costumes occasionally confuses the picture, Sireuil's straightforward representation of the action. There are few moments of real theatrical inspiration, though Sireuil's lighting creates resonant stage pictures.

The real problem lies with Swerts's score. The 36-year-old Belgian has always been something of a stylistic magpie. Debussy is an avowed model in *Liaisons*, but the orchestral textures lack the transience and subtlety of the French master's, and the harmonic idiom, incredibly, is rather less progressive. Swerts's opera could have been written 100 years ago and even then would have sounded old-fashioned.

François Le Roux should have created the role of the Vicomte de Valmont in Ghent, but a throat infection forced him to mime the role while Olivier Lallouette did a very creditable job from the side of the stage. Marilyn Schriege (the Marquise de Merteuil) was a formidable co-conspirator and Lyne Fortin their chief victim, Madame de Tourvel. The orchestral contribution, under Davin, was excellent.

Also alternating between Ghent and Antwerp is a brilliant production by Stephen Lawless of a 17th-century double bill: John Blow's *Venus and Adonis* and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. The Blow is generally agreed to suffer by comparison, but when the two are woven together as seamlessly as in Lawless's production there is much to be said for seeing them in tandem.

Benoît Dugardyn's designs place both operas in a neo-Restoration interior with shuttered windows looking out on to, variously, a starry night, an Arcadian landscape or a Trojan fleet. Semi-clad shepherds and shepherdesses (the superb Maria Cristina Kiehr among them) cavort erotically, and school-uniformed little Cupids give the action a contemporary slant.

Visual stimuli and expressive choreography (Andrew George) complement the inspired musical direction of René Jacobs. Outstanding among the principals was Daniel Mobbs as Adonis, but Janice Hall's Venus, Susan Maclean's Dido and Ned Barth's Aeneas were hardly less impressive.

THIS WEEK'S SPECIAL OFFERS

LONDON

Royal Opera House

Jan 1, 4

● THE conductor John Eliot Gardiner returns to Covent Garden for the Royal Opera's production of Massenet's sentimental comedy, *Chérubin*. The opera tells of the amorous adventures of young Chérubin, a pageboy who finds every woman he meets attractive, in spite of the reforming efforts of the Philosopher, the man in charge of his moral education, and Nina, who selflessly adores him. Will they finally win Chérubin over? Susan Graham sings the title role, with Elizabeth Futral and Alison Hagley. Theatre Club members can buy orchestra stall seats for £49 (normally £90 to £95). Tel 0171-304 4000

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Star quality: Jonathan Cope and Darcy Russell in Frederick Ashton's *Cinderella*

New girl at the ball

BELINDA Hatley has been with the Royal Ballet for eight years, but as a first soloist she is still finding her feet in principal roles. The latest to come her way is Ashton's *Cinderella*, a sweet-tempered heroine well-suited to Hatley's agreeable stage persona.

Her Cinderella is a demure creature, tenderly affectionate towards her ineffectual father and wistfully remembering her dead mother. She may be ill-treated by her wicked step-sisters, but she has the grace to forgive them. Her salvation is the escape into fantasy, a journey into the imagination which Hatley makes most persuasively.

The ball scene includes some gruelling choreography, a hurdle that gave Hatley pause for thought, especially

DANCE

Cinderella

Covent Garden

Cinderella

Cinderella

Cinderella

Cinderella

Cinderella

Cinderella

Cinderella

Cinderella

Cinderella

Cinderella

Cinderella

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Cinderella

Cinderella

The night before, *Cinderella* featured two of the established names of the Royal Ballet: Darcy Russell and Jonathan Cope. Russell's reading is surprisingly buoyant: a life of drudgery in the family kitchen doesn't seem to dampen her spirited determination to dream of better things. Her dancing was sunny and paced with a teasing musicality.

Cope, for his part, exuded true star quality. His first entrance as the Prince was a winning display of regal self-possession and romantic poise. Cope's splendid physique is the envy of many a dancer; now, it would appear, he is adding his own charismatic glamour to nature's wonderful gift.

DEBRA CRAINE

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament

EMILY MCKENZIE

Age: 22

Profession: Actress

Currently playing: Her first professional job is playing Sara Crewe, the lead in the Christmas production of *A Little Princess* at the Library Theatre in Manchester, adapted from Frances Hodgson Burnett's book "Doing both a matinee and an afternoon show leaves me really knackered," she says. Before that, she was working as a waitress in Selfridges, which was presumably even more tiring.

What do the cast think of her? "Most of them are a lot more experienced than me, so I have learnt a lot. I did feel a bit out of my depth at first, but they have been really encouraging. I was impressed to find that Ronnie Barker's daughter is in the cast. Like her Dad, she's got great timing."

Other than Selfridges, where did she train? After getting four A levels at West Kirby Grammar School for Girls, including a B in Theatre Studies (and an E in English), she studied theatre and media drama at the University of Glamorgan and the Welsh College of Music and Drama, which she left last year. In May 1995, McKenzie won an acting commendation at the National Student Drama Festival in a production of a play called *Let's Play A Game Sorry*.

What else has she done? Give her a chance — she's only 22. She has starred in a short film made by a fellow student.

What? Surely she has been in *The Bill*? She hasn't been approached. Yet.

How about *Casualty* then? Please. That's enough.

What does she want to do? "It's great to have any work, but I'd love to do a mixture of theatre, TV and film. I'm one of the lucky ones so far."

What do her parents think of her success? "I had always wanted to be an actress, although initially they took a lot of talking round — neither of them have theatrical backgrounds — but they certainly get excited when they come and see me."

GUY WALTERS



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LANDMARK

Amid the tacky charm of a cheap Florida resort resides the home of America's voyage into outer space



CHOICE 1

John Eliot Gardiner conducts *Cherubin* at Covent Garden
VENUE: Tonight at the Royal Opera House



THE TIMES ARTS



CHOICE 2

Ronnie Corbett stars in *Mother Goose*, Bromley's Christmas pantomime
VENUE: Today at the Churchill Theatre



CHOICE 3

In Cardiff, Mark Wigglesworth conducts a New Year's Day concert
VENUE: Tonight at St David's Hall

Rundown

home of the right stuff

If These Walls Could Speak: Nigel Hawkes on the alligators, mosquitoes and towering achievements witnessed at Cape Canaveral

Cape Canaveral is in Florida, but not as Tom Wolfe recorded in *The Right Stuff*, any part of Florida you would write home about. When earmarked as a missile testing range in 1947, it was a strip of marsh and sandy scrub 34 miles long and five to ten miles wide, lying roughly between nowhere and the sea. Its most active residents were mosquitoes, rising in black clouds from the alligator-infested swamps.

What the Cape did have was geography. Far enough south to take some advantage from the Earth's rotational velocity to get satellites into orbit, and with plenty of Atlantic to swallow up misfires, it offered the rocket men a perfect playground.

Wernher von Braun and his German confederates had already launched more than 60 V-2s at White Sands, New Mexico, but the desert wasn't big enough for them. In May 1947 a rocket went the wrong way and landed amid the graves in a Mexican cemetery south of Juarez — a clear hint to move on.

The sense of place is less intense in America than it is in Europe, no doubt because there is so much more place to sense, and because the human footprint on most of it is so impermanent. But, by the same token, time in America moves faster, so that by 1974 — less than 25 years after its first launch — the Cape was declared a national historical site. And quite right, too: it is a place steeped in our all-too-recent yesterdays.

In 1981 I spent an uncomfortable night at the Cape, wrapped in a blanket in the back of a hired Ford. The day before had been fixed for the first launch of the space shuttle, and I had set out at dawn from an Orlando motel for the easy 40-mile drive down US A1A for the launch. Me and several million others, with less than ten minutes of the countdown to go, I was stuck in a jam some distance from the site.

Then providence, in the form of a faulty computer, stepped in. The launch was called off and rescheduled for two days later. Rather than risk a repeat of my humiliation, I spent the night before the launch in the car and watched, stiff-limbed, as *Columbia* finally made a perfect arc against a blue sky. A glass of champagne would

have been welcome at this point, but the Cape in those days was an austere sort of place for the visiting press. You watched the launch from plain wooden stands or from a stretch of sparsely covered open ground in front, running down to a creek where alligators ostentatiously turned their backs on all the fuss.

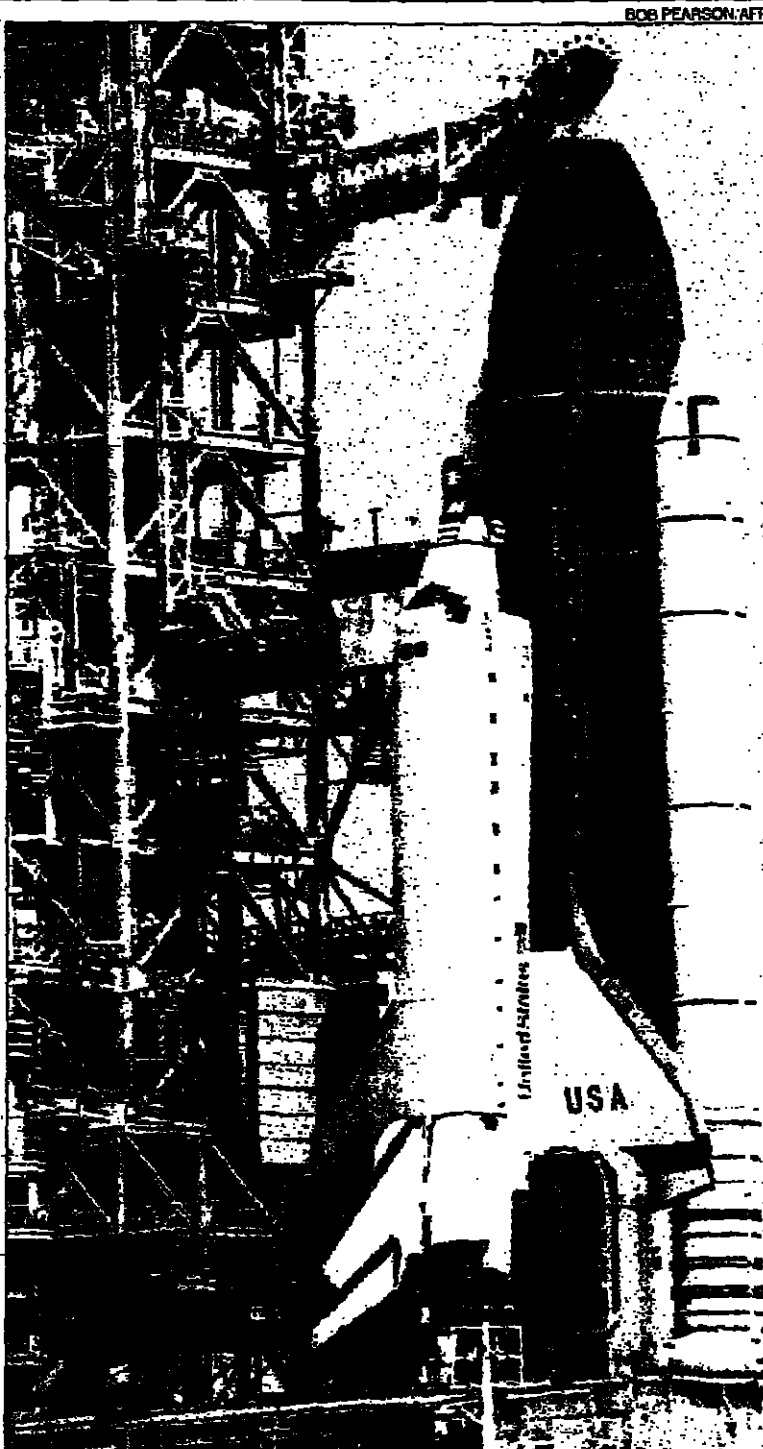
The Cape marries the austerity of an army base to the impermanence of a cheap resort. The nearest town is Cocoa Beach, "so Low Rent that nothing on this earth could ever change it", according to Wolfe.

Canaveral was originally named by early Spanish sailors for its abundance of cane fields, the only remarkable quality it possessed. After President Kennedy's assassination, there was a half-baked bid to rename the Cape after him, but it never caught on, and I can't say I'm sorry. There are enough Kennedy memorials already without the chance of a land which already possesses such a resonant title.

The first launch at the Cape, in July 1950, was of a rocket oddly named *Bumper 7*, a design close enough to the V-2 to be readily recognisable to the slave labourers who built von Braun's rockets in the last years of the war. A layer of concrete 1000 wide was laid directly on the sandy soil, while steel scaffolding borrowed from local paint stores provided the gantry. An old shack, once used as a changing room for swimmers brave enough to ignore the fire ants, was surrounded by sandbags and turned into a launch control blockhouse.

As 100 journalists watched from the beach, *Bumper 7* proved a total fizzle. Salt air had corroded its delicate innards, and it never rose above its pad. Nor was this the last of the Cape's disasters, because, as befits a historical site, it has seen failures along with its triumphs. Here the humiliation of *Sputnik's* success was compounded by the failure of a Vanguard rocket to reach even the nearby Banana River, never mind orbit; here, too, three astronauts died in a fire when testing the Apollo spacecraft, and here the seven-strong crew of the shuttle *Challenger* perished in 1986, in full view of a shocked nation.

You might expect that recent launches would have obliterated all



A space shuttle is readied for blastoff at Cape Canaveral, the former Florida wasteland where mankind's biggest leaps are now almost commonplace

evidence of the earlier ones, but that is not the American way. Rather than reconstruct a pad, it is easier to build another a little distance away, so much of the history of the Cape is laid out in rusting gantries and long-abandoned blockhouses. From the slit windows of one of them I remember squinting across a hundred yards or so to the pad where a Redstone rocket lifted Alan Shepard in the first American manned space flight. Shepard had to wait so long on that pad that he was forced to pee inside his space suit, a contingency never anticipated by NASA.

By the time of the Apollo missions' Saturn V launches — the greatest noise ever created by man, bar none — things were bigger, and a bit more sophisticated. They needed to be launching a Saturn V was the equivalent of hurling a full-size naval destroyer ten miles in the air without breaking a thing on board.

Today the Cape is definitely tourist

LONDON

THE HOTCHPOTCH PANTOMIME

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FAMILY EVENTS

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Gillian Hawley

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Alan Coren



Thanks to clashing with the birthday of Jesus, my column, along with the rest of The Times, did not appear last Wednesday. Unfortunately, readers thus never saw the *Grand Christmas Quiz* I had compiled in order to help them through the Yuletide shenanigans. More unfortunately yet, the answers to that quiz had already gone to press for this Wednesday, so I am afraid you will just have to make of them what you can.

CHRISTMAS QUIZ ANSWERS

1. 138 eggs and a herringbone overcoat. He died in Ghent, attended by most of the woodwind section and a tall ginger woman claiming to be a cousin of Isambard Kingdom Brunel.
2. The sum of the squares of the other three sides, which explains why it fell over. The man charged with stoking the boilers was never found.
3. 1-0 after extra time. The penalty was taken by Queen Victoria.
4. The so-called Cardboard Bastard Case. Both bishops were defrocked. The remains of the vole are now in the Natural History Museum.
5. *The Sisters Karamazov*. Dostoevsky put the manuscript in a left-luggage locker, but since he recorded the details in his diary only as: "It was on the — of —, in this year of grace 18—, that I deposited the envelope in the town of M—, at the coach station on the corner of D— street," he never succeeded in finding it again.
6. Norman Lamont is the odd one out. All the rest are badgers.
7. Minus 39F, at which point it assumed an extraordinary resemblance to Selena Scott. Sadly, the temperature was such that none of the photographs came out, but the full story was recounted in a jingle which reached Number 7 in the Lapp charts.
8. A kind of whisky, made from conkers.
9. Because neither of them was gay, but this was not discovered until the contest was over. As the result, the Golden Laryngoscope was not awarded again until after the Great War, when it was open to Flemish speakers for the first time.
10. It forms part of Virginia Bottomley.
11. It was a picture postcard which led him to believe that the grave of Prester John lay beneath Euston Station. He espied the dynamite charge on a technicality, and a Private Member's Bill was subsequently rushed through Parliament clarifying the wording on all-plaform tickets.
12. "Dear God, the very horses seem asleep!" Wordsworth changed the line only after Coleridge threw a sheep at him.
13. Pippin the Incontinent. The duel was interrupted six times under the terms of the Caspian Convention, and upon the final resumption it was discovered that the howling had become irreparably slack due to sleep. Seconds settled the dispute by throwing coins into a chamber pot.
14. Marlene Dietrich, because George Formby's turned out to be smaller.
15. A canteen of cutlery. The camel was found in a Cheltenham hotel, but no satisfactory explanation was ever furnished as to why Scotland Yard assumed that the snooker cue belonged to Sir Stanley Baldwin.
16. "Ich bin ein Frankfurter." He was thrown into the Rhine.
17. Neither is correct: (a) would result in all clocks having to be reset to take account of the shift from left to right, while (b) would mean that only a coalition government would be in a position to petition the Royal Assent.
18. E-mc². He hanged himself from Brooklyn Bridge.
19. False. Although all three did claim to be David Mellor, it was only the Rastafarian who escaped through the window, the bidder was already cracked, and the dog did not answer to the name of Desmond Wilcox.
20. Wallis Simpson. The outburst was instantly withdrawn from sale.
21. Yes, he did: Irving de Gaulle. He was in the gown business.
22. She trained moths.
23. They are the only birds to communicate by breaking wind.

Michael Gove argues that the law is wrong: the Cromwell Street story should not be made into a film

Cinema screens out the real horror of violence

Two years ago today in a Birmingham prison cell, Fred West took his own life. The Gloucester builder's final killing cheated his victims' families of justice and the nation of the satisfaction of a suitable catharsis. Now the slow, painful and imperfect process of healing for those who suffered in Gloucester — and beyond — has been crudely set back by an ugly conjunction of bureaucratic crassness and commercial insensitivity. It is far more than the timing which is objectionable about the revelation of plans to make a film of the life and times of Fred West. The Official Solicitor may have a responsibility to look after the interests of the West children but it is hard to see how they are best advanced by negotiating to sell the film rights to their father's story. How the respected Portman Entertainment Group came to believe it could embark on a celluloid retelling of the events in Cromwell Street for profit must test even the most cynical.

Fred and Rosemary West were no ordinary murderers. Although Hollywood has done its worst to make the serial killer as cosily familiar a screen presence as the cowboy used to be, and despite the brutalising effect of ever more explicit violence, the real horror of Cromwell Street had a capacity to shock and stop the heart seldom equalled since the war. Only, perhaps, the calculating sadism of Ian Brady and Myra Hindley stands comparison. The Wests chose the

innocent, the vulnerable, their own flesh and blood for sexual violence and torture. Afterwards, bodies were disposed of with all the ceremony of unwary refuse. To imagine that their story could be told on the big screen is to grotesquely misunderstand the nature of their crime. It is true that murders have often been the stuff of film entertainment, crimes of passion or standard domestic, killings that occurred during armed robberies or calculated individual assassinations. But although each taking of human life is unique and horrible there is something uniquely horrible about the scale, manner and mentality of the Wests' crimes. Only organisations or individuals who had forgotten how to feel could think otherwise.

It might be argued that there was merit in a story which has the capacity to make us reflect on the nature of evil and its persistence in our world being told by a responsible and professional film company such as Portman. Their professionalism and commitment to the highest production values is apparently all

too clear in their film versions of Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* and Beryl Bainbridge's *An Awfully Big Adventure*. But it is precisely because any film made by a respectable company committed to cinematic excellence that the enterprise is so dangerous.

Cinema is, at its best, a simultaneously seductive and pasteurising art form. In the hands of a skilled director, and Portman would not entrust its reputation to anyone else, violence inevitably loses the capacity to truly horrify. When we read about violence such as the Wests' in the dry and suitably censored court reports imagination provides the horror and moral sense the revision. More than that, the chance to reflect and contextualise which we have while reading is denied us by the narrative sweep of the film and the distorting focus of the lens.

No film could, conceivably, give a wider audience cause to reflect on the nature of evil and the carelessness with which society can forget those who slip through the safety net and into the wrong hands. Those with a mind to

consider such matters will already have had their consciences engaged by the press reporting and works such as Andrew O'Hagan's impressive study of lost souls, *The Missing*. Any film would, sadly, and inevitably, attract only ghouls and controversy.

It would, however, from those sources alone, make money. And that is sadly the motivation, not just for Portman but also the Official Solicitor, Peter Harris. It was the Official Solicitor who made over Fred West's papers to the biographer Geoffrey Wansell for an "authorised" life of the killer. The justification was twofold. The first defence was that such a book would place on the record the doings, and thoughts, of West for posterity and as a warning. It might also displace in the market cruder accounts of the events in Cromwell Street.

The second justification was a duty of care enjoined on the Official Solicitor by the nature of his office. He is bound to look after the financial affairs of the surviving West children. Their interests were served by the publication of the

book but would be considerably boosted by any film. Features at MGM, or even post-warsheds hours on Carlton yield much larger sums than even the newsmen's hardbacks in Waterstone's.

It would be wrong if the West children, in their own way victims of Cromwell Street, were to have their father's and mother's sins visited on them. They have suffered and should not be denied their due. But they have already received it.

The Wansell book, although few could ever find it diverting, will have given them an income which many would implicitly have denied them. Although its detail is repellent, the book is at least a sober medium and the style restrained. It cannot provide the gratuitous extra offence which a film, inevitably, would.

Whatever extra money the West children might enjoy from a film would be bought at the cost of continued, indeed intensified, pain for all those who still grieve. If the Official Solicitor persists in his intentions, he will be embarking on a course so hidebound by law and hard-headed in effect as to test the satirical pen of a Dickens.

Censorship is a weapon which should only be used in war and if anyone wishes, in the future, to make a film which charts the horrors of Cromwell Street, it would be wrong to use the law to stop them.

It is, however, insupportable that the law should be conspiring to see such a film made.

At long last, peace in our time

We should be celebrating a world without wars, whatever the prophets of doom say. Why curse our good fortune?



During the Spanish Civil War, a fighter dies. "War and the threat of war have always been a kind of solution"

I shall start the year by chancing my arm. The world is more at peace today than ever before in living memory. In 1997 we contemplate a second year in which, for the first time since proverbial records began, nothing that could be called a state of hot war exists between sovereign countries. Guns are not firing across borders. Soldiers are not dying in their nation's cause. There are civil wars, drugs wars, gang wars and trade wars. But rip-roaring, sound-the-trumpet, bang-the-drum wars of national aggression seem to have gone out of fashion. Nobody has noticed.

The Stockholm Institute for Peace Research publishes a report each year on world conflicts. It has become a bible for arms salesmen, mercenaries, diplomats, United Nations staff and foreign reporters. The last yearbook mustered two dozen internal conflicts in such places as Afghanistan, Rwanda and Chechnya. The next update is likely to show a fall even in this category. (I believe the only artillery pieces currently being fired in anger are around Kabul.) There is plenty of international tension, as between China and Taiwan, India and Pakistan, and Iraq and its neighbours. The political meteorologist can find dark clouds over Bosnia, Zaire and Palestine. But this is hardly the stuff of apocalyptic copy.

Most years, statesmen and bishops queue up on Christmas Day to condemn conflicts and bloodshed and earnestly tell the world to behave better. This year, from the American President to the Pope, they were bereft of raw material. The Pope deplored "the clash of arms shattering the spell of peace brought by this holy day". But he gave no map reference and the phrase sounded like a papal stock-in-trade. In Britain the seasonal homilies of the Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Hume were more than usually empty exercises in the "why oh why" school of journalism.

We cannot handle good news. I believe this inability is becoming as morally debilitating as the readiness to absorb bad news. It makes us think worse of our fellow citizens and of foreign countries. We become less inclined to defend individual liberty against the encroachment of state power, since we believe that state power is necessary to counter mounting anarchy. Believing the enemies of civil order to be perpetually at our gates, we code ever more control to our rulers to fight them.

In his poem *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Constantine Cavendish portrayed a city awaiting attack. The citizens gather in the public square. They unite. The consuls don scarlet robes. Evening comes, but not the barbarians. Suddenly the citizens are told there will be no attack. Indeed, some reports deny the existence of barbarians at all. The people go home morose, saying: "Without the barbarians, what is to become of us? After all, they would have been a kind of solution."

The police would no longer be able to cope, criminality would be widespread and, for good measure, a nuclear bomb would explode somewhere in the world. This pessimism reigned even where, as in poverty, prosperity and education, there is every sign of steady improvement.

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always been a kind of solution. They make ruling easy, and make philosophy easy too.

Historians such as Marx and Spengler adopted a pessimistic view of history to validate authoritarian policies. Despite a proclaimed rightward shift over the past decade, anti-state ideology has been more apparent than real. Like Pavlov's dogs, democrats tend to salivate

replied (in *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century*) that the world faced catastrophe through overpopulation, pollution, mass migration and ozone depletion, he was lauded as a prophet. Equally exalted are pundits as diverse as Sam Huntington and *The Economist* when they predict world war between Muslim and Christian regions of the globe. Such views accord with the bad news that we read in the newspapers. Disaster must be at hand. There is no intellectual closed shop as pervasive or tight-knit as the pessimistic theory of history.

I recall the manager of an airline once complaining that his safety record was impeccable, yet nobody ever mentioned it in the media. A journalist replied that this was hardly surprising, since his planes persistently failed to crash. He was boring. Last year the world failed to crash and was thus declared boring. We honour war but have no way of honouring its absence. The world does not give itself a collective Nobel Peace Prize.

Time was when commentators were castigated as "soft on communism". Today they are damned for being soft on gloom. The pessimist has all the best tunes — and the richest friends. The think-tanks that pour out dire warnings about aggressive regimes usually have fat contracts with defence ministries. Two massive interest groups have an

aversion to news of peace. One is the arms industry and its booming subsidiary in internal security. The other is supranational diplomacy and so-called non-government organisations. Both grow fat warning of apocalyptic military and ecological conflicts. Both see optimism as a threat to their status and prosperity.

Eisenhower's "military-industrial complex" long exaggerated Soviet armed might and aggressive intent. The same complex now promotes evidence of so-called international terrorism and prescribes every civil war as having a "out-of-area destabilising effect". Its power to order the New Interventionism on parade was evident in Somalia and Bosnia. It promotes spending on arms and spending on international organisations. It periodically sends a cruise missile into Iraq.

The nadir of the alliance between the military and diplomatic intervention came with last autumn's near miss in Zaire. Amid diplomatic hysteria, 3,000 British soldiers were almost sent into the Zairean jungle, with no military objective beyond spending gargantuan amounts of money and yielding politicians some pride.

The same lobby cheered the choice of Kofi Annan as Secretary-General of the United Nations. Wherever Mr Annan treads, the Pentagon is never far behind.

There is much misery in the world and always will be. The absence of international conflict may have led to a rise in civil and separatist wars. But if an occasional civil war is the price of world peace, it is a price I am ready to pay. The danger is not that such conflicts will spread, but that they will act as magnets to transient intervention from the UN or Nato countries under the cloak of humanitarian intervention. Witness the antics of the Americans in Beirut, the Germans in Croatia and the French in Zaire.

Of course, optimism has its risks. The perfect soldier is, as Tolstoy said, the most idle. He deters battle merely by existing. But this must not delude us that he is not needed. The world's democracies must stay on guard. Nor is there any danger of the defence lobby allowing this case to go unheard. Military spending is still huge.

What we find so hard is to acknowledge the current success of that spending. Peace seems invisible and therefore uncountable. The West's response to Rwanda, the nearest we came to internationalising and exacerbating a civil war — saw a yearning for battle, an irrational, almost desperate desire to intervene. It was as if inaction was in danger of putting diplomats and generals, statesmen, bishops and journalists out of work.

Swords into ploughshares is boring. Ploughshares mean food mountains. Swords still mean glory.

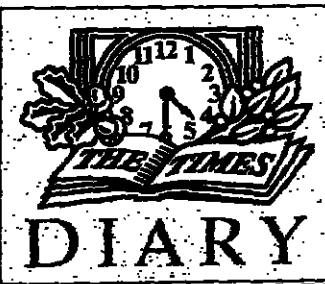
Rod runner

PATIENCE is a virtue seldom seen in rock stars. Rod Stewart, it seems, was unable to sit through Monday night's premiere of *A Streetcar Named Desire* at the Haymarket Theatre. Admittedly, at three hours long, Tennessee Williams' play can be the theatrical equivalent of a musty, fat paperback. But with Jessica Lange on top form in her West End debut, Stewart's decision to bail out at half time was particularly feeble. Rude to boot,

since he had approached the promoters of the play for tickets. Even Mrs Stewart, the model Rachel Hunter, whose reputation rests more upon her physical attributes than her academic abilities, stayed the course. For once, Stewart could not attribute his early exit to excessive perspiration inside his usual leather trousers, as he had donned a pinstripe suit for the evening. It seems it was plain boredom, with hunger thrown in. During the interval, the Stewarts and two friends holed up in the cloakroom by the stalls bar for a conference. Dinner was mooted by Stewart, only for the subject to be dismissed by his wife.

When the bell rang for the second half, Rod and his friend had decided. As the ushers encouraged everyone back in, Mrs Stewart returned to her seat while her husband told her: "If anyone asks, tell them I've got a dicky stomach." And with that he paused, checked the coast was clear and hopped it.

● DESPITE undergoing surgery to remove a malignant tumor from his right lung last month, Czech President Václav Havel is still in need of encouragement to kick his



lifelong smoking habit. To that end, Havel's aides have urged him to include a public pledge to quit in his traditional new year's broadcast.

All a-quiver

A FRIEND suffering from heavy flu was visiting the Louvre over Christmas. Pausing in the 18th-century section to admire a portrait of Diderot, she was alarmed to discover that the grand old man of letters was also shivering violently as if he, too, was in the grip of a terrible ague. Steadying herself on the arm of the nearest attendant, she pointed at the vibrating picture and asked if she was seeing things: "Oh non, madame," he reassured her. "Zat is zee air-conditioning, it has a little problem." The system is to be fixed

in the new year, until which time the old masters will keep shuddering on their picture hooks.

● Another Man of the Year title for the Prime Minister, this time from the Midlands. "Major won the title fair and square," said a staggered Ed Doolan, whose Sunday morning show on BBC Radio West Midlands featured the poll. A call of congratulation to Conservative Central Office: "We're delighted," he said, "especially as we knew nothing about it."

Noble gas

FIRST in the queue for the title "Fat Head of 1997" is Joseph Slickert, 72, the self-styled HRH Prince Joseph, Duke of Clarence. Yesterday he cropped up at the funeral of Dame Elizabeth Hill, former Professor of Slavonic Studies at Cambridge University and escapee from the Russian Revolution, purporting to represent the Romanovs, the Russian Royal Family. Using Dame Elizabeth's funeral as a pretext, he sent out a press release from his Camden home stressing his claim to the titles. No matter that the last Duke of Clarence, Queen Victoria's grandson, died childless in 1952. "He had a daughter called Alice," said the ducal hopeful. "And

she married my father, Walter." You mean Walter Slickert, the Camden impressionist who married three times, although never to a woman called Alice? That's right. I can prove it," he says. As evidence, he offers a fax purportedly from "Grand Duke Michael Alexievich of Russia", addressed to "our right trusty and well-beloved cousin".

Soft cell

CRATER-FACE, aka General Manuel Noriega, the former Panama-



"I refuse to do Trafalgar Square next year"

nian dictator, has been spending his time in prison writing his memoirs, to be called *American Prisoner: The Memoirs of Manuel Noriega*. He has written about life in the Metropolitan Correctional Facility, Miami, for *At Random*, the in-house magazine of his publisher, Random House. Life, he says, is not so bad in chokery. Fellow prisoners call him "Manny" and he watches a lot of television. "I watch more TV than I would care to admit," he says. "Even considering the fact that it is largely a frivolous exercise, it does provide a window on American popular culture." Wildlife programmes and line-dancing shows are his favourites. Among the various magazines he receives in jail is a regular copy of *Men's Health*, an organ designed for men whose life revolves around their stomach muscles.

Frankie's way

REVENGE at last for the twin curse of Dennis Roussos and Nana Mouskouri, perpetrators of the *dolmadakes* sound which blighted Woodworth's record departments for so long. To bring in 1997, Greek television last night featured Frankie Dickens, the East End Frank Sinatra impersonator and second cousin of Dame Vera Lynn. Dickens, pictured here poised for



Big in Athens: Frankie Dickens

a doo-be-doo, made his name singing in Athenian nightclubs. American businessmen then took to him and paid hefty sums for him to appear at corporate events. "I'm the first British Sinatra since Matt Monro," he says. "But isn't it just typical that I have to go to Greece before making it at home?" For the Greeks, Dickens performed his new song, *This Side of Town*, as well as Sinatra standards. After listening to the new single, I recommend that Dickens should receive a lottery grant for more travel overseas. America still needs paying back for John Denver.

P.H.S



Theatre parting: the Stewarts

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SE

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Jon Ashworth and Paul Durman on BZW's woes

Pressure time at securities house

Barclays de Zotte World (BZW), the securities house, has dismissed speculation about the future of Simon de Zoete, the senior director who led the ill-fated defence of Northern Electric. The Takeover Panel row, coupled with a poor showing in the 1996 mergers and acquisitions league, has left BZW awkwardly placed for the new year.

Mr de Zoete, who reportedly earns more than £1 million a year in his role as a vice-chairman of BZW, was directly implicated in the Takeover Panel's decision to extend the bid for Northern.

The extension gave CE Electric of America crucial time in which to muster enough shares to claim victory. The panel said BZW did not disclose its entitlement to a £250,000 discretionary fee — on top of a £1.5 million flat fee — when it sought late permission to buy Northern shares. The subsequent purchase of a stake of more than 2 per cent was crucial to the Northern defence.

Mr de Zoete was not present at the Takeover Panel meeting during which BZW was accused of being selective in its disclosure. He was in Scotland on business, and only noted a reference to a flat fee. The panel's ruling was faxed to him the following day. He returned to London that evening for a meeting with BZW's lawyers. A panel member was not contacted until 10.15pm.

It is not clear who represented BZW in Mr de Zoete's absence. He could not be contacted yesterday. BZW said his future with the firm was secure, and dismissed suggestions to the contrary as "malicious gossip".

Mr de Zoete is one of the City's most experienced hands. Chairman of BZW Equities since March 1994, he advised Granada on its bids for both LWT and Forte. He advised on BTR's £2.06 billion bid for Nylex; Pearson's £600 million BSkyB stake disposal; GEC's £835 million bid for VSEL; and BTR's £2.1 billion bid for Hawker Siddeley.

Mr de Zoete is a great nephew of Johnny Bevan, senior partner of de Zoete & Bevan, which was acquired by Barclays in 1986. He joined de Zoete & Bevan in 1966, making general partner three years later, and rose to become chairman of de Zoete & Bevan in



Simon de Zoete, a BZW vice-chairman, was implicated in the Takeover Panel's decision to extend the bid for Northern Electric

its later role as the corporate broking arm of BZW.

The Northern affair has met with a mixed response. One senior merchant banker said: "I feel very sorry for BZW. I think they've been harshly treated. It's bad luck that they did not make full disclosure at the first opportunity. I don't know why they did not, but I don't believe it was for any malign reason."

He said that Mr de Zoete's absence must have been a factor, adding: "It's BZW's fault for not being able to put all the facts on the table the first time round. Simon de Zoete was up in Scotland and he's taken a lot of flak. Why the hell wasn't he there?"

"I cannot imagine that, where a

transaction was taking place, we would not have ensured that the relevant directors who knew what was happening were present. BZW have brought it upon themselves."

The pledging of an additional fee in relation to the Northern bid was not in itself unusual. Clients frequently agree to pay investment banks an additional fee if their work on a deal is exceptionally good or effective.

The affair comes at a sensitive time for BZW, which did not fare well in the annual Acquisitions Monthly survey of mergers and

acquisitions advisers. It was ranked thirteenth, having worked on £5.7 billion of deals in 1996. Philip Healey, editor of Acquisitions Monthly, thinks the bad impression created by the Northern Electric row could hamper BZW's attempt to build up its corporate finance business.

"Unfortunately, today, bad media coverage stays much longer [in the minds of clients] than it used to. UK investment banks have got to be much cleaner on fees." The Northern incident increases pressure on

BZW's chief executive, Bill Harrison, who took office in September. He was brought in as successor to David Band, who died in March while on a skiing holiday. Mr Harrison's remuneration — including a guaranteed £1.25 million bonus in his first year — attracted further unwelcome publicity for the firm. Donald Brydon resigned as deputy chief executive when Mr Harrison joined.

Mr Healey says BZW has one chance to get it right. He said: "This is really their last chance to make it big in mergers and acquisitions. If they can't do it in the takeover boom of the next year to 18 months, they never will do. But BZW will do well, because Bill Harrison is a dynamo."



Opportunities Down Under lure investors

UK banks are tipped to take a look at Australia, says Rachel Bridge

Among British companies learning to say "G'day, mate" in 1996, as more UK firms headed for Australia, were PowerGen and National Power. The electricity generators, both led consortia to snap up power stations for AS2.4 billion apiece in the state of Victoria's big electricity self-off.

British Aerospace also made its presence felt, acquiring AWA Defence Industries, one of Australia's largest defence companies, and winning a AS900 million (£450 million) contract to supply trainer jets to the Australian air force.

Others making forays included Grand Metropolitan, which bought the Pasta House fresh pasta business for AS100 million; Premier Oil, which successfully bid for Discovery Petroleum at a cost of AS107.8 million; Daily Mail and General Trust, which bought a string of radio stations; and Chubb Security, which acquired a fire protection business for AS220 million.

Marks & Spencer caused a huge stir Down Under by saying that it intended to open its first two stores in Australia in 1997. Companies from continental Europe were at it, too. AXA, the French insurance group, secured a 51 per cent stake in National Mutual, the insurer, and the Dutch transport company KPN spent AS2 billion to acquire TNT.

A Sydney consultant advising UK and US companies says that overseas players are attracted by Australia's combination of a skilled multilingual workforce, sound economic fundamentals and a growing middle class — and its handy position as a stepping stone into Asia. The secret of success, he says, is to invest in the right sectors, with media and telecommunications turning into no-go areas for foreign investors. He says: "You really have to separate out the politically sensitive investments from the others because there is

no question that walls are being quietly erected in some areas such as media to protect Australia's interests."

Indeed, one person booking out was Conrad Black, the Canadian media magnate, who sold his 25 per cent stake in John Fairfax, the Australian press group, in frustration at the Government's refusal to let him increase his shareholding.

The past year has also seen big differences in the performance of particular sectors. Peter Horn, economist with SBC Warburg, says that although overall GDP growth has been running at 3.5 per cent, the Australian economy is effectively two-speed, with mining and telecommunications chalking up 5 to 6 per cent growth and retailing stuck at 1.5 per cent.

Another factor affecting investment is the view that the Coalition Government, which came to power in March, lacks the resolve to push through industrial reforms.

The sectors to watch in 1997, say analysts, will be mining and banking. A major report into banking — due by March — is expected to relax restraints on ownership, paving the way for takeovers and mergers. Bank of Scotland last year took over, for AS900 million, BankWest, and analysts expect Australia's largest banks, ANZ, Westpac and National Australia, to be scrutinised by potential British buyers in 1997.

Mining is seen as ripe for takeover activity, with a falling gold price, and the need for consolidation to rationalise its cost structure.

Hoping for action in 1997 are BAA, the British airport operator, National Express and Serco, the facilities management group, which are waiting for Australia's much-heralded AS4 billion airport privatisation. In 1997, apparently, it really will happen.

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MANAGING CHANGE

Personal Assistant

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Office Manager

Due to structural change in the firm, the Managing Director is seeking an Office Manager to provide a high level of support. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the Managing Director's office, including the management of his diary, travel arrangements, correspondence and other administrative tasks. The successful candidate will be a proactive, organised, and efficient individual with excellent communication skills. The position is a full-time role, and the successful candidate will be based in the City of London.

Human Resources Contract

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Tina Black, Human Resources Manager

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Lang welcomes CBI stand against social chapter

Politicians warned over pay inflation

By Philip Bassett
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

CHAMBERS of commerce today warn an incoming government of whichever political persuasion to take action if necessary against signs of wage inflation in order to prevent any return to boom and bust economic cycles.

With a general election now only months away, business leaders are gearing themselves up for what they believe will be a ferocious political argument — including preparing themselves for a possible change of administration.

Ian Lang, President of the

Board of Trade, presented a new commitment from business to opposing the social chapter, which a Labour government would seek to end the UK's opt-out from it.

Mr Lang said that this clearly showed the shared interests of business and the Conservatives, and the willingness of Labour's claims to be the party now closest to business. He said: "The Conservative Party is the party of business, and the CBI's policy priorities are our priorities. They show that Labour's claim to be the party of business is a fraud."

Mr Lang was responding to

the CBI's new year statement, which made clear its opposition to the social chapter, and to Labour's proposed windfall tax on privatised utilities.

Sir Colin Marshall, CBI President, insisted on BBC Radio yesterday that the CBI's position was one of political neutrality. Asked whether he feared an economy run by Tony Blair, the Labour leader, and Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, Sir Colin replied: "So long as the policies adopted by the Labour Party — if it were to form the next government — are not at variance with what we believe are in the interests of the

country from a business and industry standpoint."

Chambers of commerce leaders say today that there will be no economic room in Britain this year for missed opportunities. Regardless of the election, 1997 will be the year for the UK to capitalise on its strong competitive position, which will be possible provided the economy remains stable and there are no "sudden" changes of policy, chambers' leaders say. Sound economic management must remain the UK's main aim.

Ian Peters, deputy director general of the British Chambers of Commerce, says today

in a new year message that the election "provides the opportunity for business to set out its priorities — and for politicians to demonstrate that they are listening."

Whichever political party wins the election, the chambers say, priority must be given to education and training. Dr Peters says: "Skill shortages are already an unwelcome feature of the recovery, with all the implications they carry for wage inflation and a return to boom and bust. We cannot let this happen."

Companies should make a new year resolution to tackle health problems at work, the

Government's Health and Safety Commission said yesterday.

Frank Davies, HSC chairman, said: "More people are working now than for many years, but fewer people are being injured or killed in accidents at work. It is good news that workplaces have been getting safer. But what is not such good news is that workplaces do not seem to be getting healthier."

He said 2.2 million people suffer from ill-health that they believe has been caused by work, with occupational ill-health costing the economy up to £5 billion a year.

Move to revive High Court tussle with BA

By Fraser Nelson

THE High Court battle between British Airways and John Gorman, who is accusing the airline of harassment and dirty tricks, is set to resume in the new year as he mounts a fresh attempt to have the case reinstated.

Mr Gorman is to reappear in the High Court again on February 13, lodging appeal documents to reopen his action against BA, in which he is suing for damages after allegedly swallowing glass in an in-flight meal from London to New York.

The appeal comes two months after a judge dismissed his action after Mr Gorman failed to appear in court.

Mr Gorman is claiming that the airline led the court to believe that he was on holiday in Majorca at the time of the trial, and that the matter was dismissed on unfair grounds.

He intends to provide medical certificates to prove he was not on holiday, but suffering from a serious illness in a hospital in

Tenerife, where he now lives for health reasons. British Airways denied the allegations, saying it had never disputed that Mr Gorman was in Tenerife.

A spokesman for BA said that if Mr Gorman succeeded in having the case reopened it would press for an urgent hearing date rather than allow a three-year delay that had held back the case so far.

This is the first of two cases that Mr Gorman is bringing against British Airways. He is also suing the airline and the Metropolitan Police for harassment and physical abuse that he claims to have suffered at the hands of both.

He said that he received a series of threatening phone calls, which he claims have since been traced to the airline's head office.

British Airways admits that calls have been made from its office to Mr Gorman's number, but says they could have been made by Mr Gorman's friends who had access to their phone network.

The action alleging harassment is not expected to start until the end of the year.

Business supports union with Europe

By Philip Bassett
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BUSINESS leaders are to give strong support for Britain's full participation in Europe. The support will come in a study of the UK's competitive business performance to be published this month by the Commission on Public Policy and British Business.

The commission, set up by the centre-left Institute for Public Policy Research, is to put forward a range of policy recommendations, including proposals on corporate tax and governance, and on the minimum wage and the European social chapter.

The findings have been outlined to the Government. Labour party and business leaders. In particular, just before Christmas, commission members met officials from the Cabinet Office's Competitiveness Unit.

The unit is currently working on a fourth competitiveness White Paper, which will be published after the election if the Conservatives are returned to government. It is significant that the unit is maintaining contacts with the commission, which though independent, is seen as having close links to Tony Blair.

In its draft report, the commission says that the growth and development of the European Union is "of central importance" to British business, with many government policies of importance to business having to be pursued at the EU level.

The commission, which includes the heads of Sainsbury's, GEC, and British Aerospace, will caution that goods and capital will move increasingly freely within the EU, and companies will be increasingly ready to locate anywhere within it on purely economic factors.

Insisting that business and government in the UK must always bear in mind the impact of policy on other European countries and Britain's relations with them, the commission will say: "We can perhaps seek to opt in or out of particular initiatives in a variable geometry Europe, but we cannot escape the need to work closely with our European partners and assist them in building a new sort of political and economic union which is acceptable to all its members."



Lloyds TSB said conflict of interest was not an issue in Peter Ellwood's decision to stand down at Sears

Ellwood leaves Sears board

PETER ELLWOOD, who resigned as chairman of Lloyds TSB, has resigned his directorship of Sears, a US retail group, it was announced yesterday.

Mr Ellwood, who will succeed Sir Brian Pitman at Lloyds TSB, has been on the

Sears board since September 1994. Sears said he is considering "a number of his outside activities" in view of his new responsibilities. He is also a director of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, deputy chairman of Business in the Community and chairman of Visa International.

Last month two prominent retailers left the board of Lloyds TSB. Sir Richard Greenbury, chairman of Marks & Spencer, and John Gildersleeve, a director of Tesco, decided to leave the board because of the two retail companies' growing interest in financial services.

Sears, which has been struggling to slim down and restructure, has yet to make any serious moves into financial services and Lloyds TSB yesterday emphasised that conflict of interest was not an issue in Mr Ellwood's decision to resign from the board of Sears.

Trading in Hong Kong fund halted

By Gavin Lumsden

TRADING in the split capital Hong Kong Investment Trust was temporarily suspended yesterday as 750 shareholders voted on wind-up proposals from Jupiter International Group, the fund's manager.

Most zero-preference shareholders, representing half of the £28 million trust's assets, voted for cash, having seen their investment more than double from 20p at the fund's launch in 1991 to 43p.

However, Jupiter said that it had retained the bulk of ordinary shareholders who over the past five years have been rewarded by a near-trebling of net asset value from 24p to 60p.

Jupiter said that around 60 per cent of ordinary shareholders, holding £8.4 million, opted to invest in the Hong Kong Investment Company, a closed end Luxembourg-based fund due to be launched soon by Jupiter.

Analysts said Jupiter had found the split capital structure of Hong Kong Investment Trust too difficult to manage, particularly as it creates conflicts of interest between the different shareholders towards the end of a fund's life.

Holders of the remainder of the ordinary shares, equivalent to £5.6 million, chose to invest in the Hong Kong portion of the existing Jupiter Tyndall Global Fund.

Costain risks disruption of share-issue meeting

AZMAN SHAHIL, the new Costain chairman, faces a turbulent debut at the extraordinary general meeting on Monday at which he will ask shareholders to approve the issuing of more shares (Oliver August writes).

Protesters against the Newbury bypass, which is being built by the troubled construction group, have threatened to disrupt the meeting.

At an EGM last year, protesters stormed the podium and prevented Dr Azman, formerly a joint deputy chairman, from giving a presentation.

Dr Azman is today taking over from Sir Christopher Benson, who is bowing out early after a disastrous year

for Costain. Sir Christopher announced his decision to leave the company four weeks ago after the disposal of its US Coal business and its stake in London's Spitalfields development.



Benson: group refocused

ment in order to raise cash and refocus the group.

The proposal to issue more shares was announced at the same time. Shareholders approved the disposals last week.

Sir Christopher said: "Together with the new investment in the group, agreed banking through to June 1998, and the continuing support of our major shareholder, Intra, we now have the basis for the group to move forward, concentrating solely on its core engineering and construction businesses."

Control of the company now rests with three Middle Eastern companies. Intra, of Malaysia, holds 40 per cent after a £75 million buy-out last summer. Dr Azman is a director of Intra.

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The Times executive leather collection

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7TH JANUARY 1997

Answers from page 29

CHAMPART
(a) The division of the produce of land. Hence, a form of tenure or lease, in which the landlord receives a fixed share of the produce. Also, a charge upon land, consisting of a part of the produce. Still in use in the Channel Islands. "The land was subject to both tithes and champart — the latter being a payment of every twelfth sheaf of corn."

COWAN
(c) One who builds dry stone walls (ie without mortar); a dry-stone-diker; applied derogatorily to one who does the work of a mason, but has not been regularly apprenticed or bred to the trade. Derivation unknown. "He was by trade a cowan, that is an occupation combining the callings of a mason and house carpenter in one."

CLASTIC
(c) In geology, consisting of broken pieces of older rocks. Of an anatomy model; composed of a number of separable pieces. From the Greek *klaînai* to break (off).

CONIROSTER
(b) A member of the *Conirostres*, a group of insessorial birds having a conical bill. From the Latin *conus* a cone, *rostrum* a bill or beak. An 1824 dictionary of science: "Conirostres. Conirostres, including those which have a thick robust conical beak, as the crows and rooks."

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Out with the in-jokes, let's have some new

New year, same old dilemma. Am I generous with my praise of *Cuts* (ITV), pour encourager les autres single plays? Or am I honest, thereby hastening the day when ITV's drama output consists wholly of alternating episodes of *Peak Practice* and *Soldier, Soldier*? Not easy, is it?

Honestly, however, it will have to be. In which case *Cuts* was derivative, too long and apparently designed only to appeal to an audience of television executives. There was a running joke in it about the Edinburgh Television Festival. "I believe in quality/writers/whatever," Lord Melrose (Timothy West) would shout from time to time. "I said so at the Edinburgh Festival, so I'm stuck with it." If the idea of adapting Malcolm Bradbury's comic novel *La* was also meant to appeal to the Edinburgh Festival, I wouldn't be the slightest bit surprised. All sorts

of things sound like good ideas late at night in the bar of The George Hotel.

The story of *Cuts*, adapted here by David Nobbs, was basically a modest reworking of Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop*. Instead of William Boot becoming a war correspondent through mistaken identity, we had Henry Babbarcombe (Peter Davison) plucked from rural obscurity to write television drama because his improbably glamorous literary agent was willing to go to bed with Jocelyn Price (Nigel Planer), head of drama at Eldorado Television. And if you think that name made them wince at the BBC wait till you hear the title of the series that Eldorado had just cancelled — *Gladstone: Man of Empire*. King any bells?

Book, you will recall, wrote the nature notes for Lord Copper's estate. Babbarcombe, by modest contrast, had written the definitive work, *Dithyrambic Pentameters*

and two novels about garden sheds. The man was clearly a fraud — everybody knows that the comic novel about garden sheds was written by my colleague, Lynne Truss.

Fraud or not, Babbarcombe was easy meat for writer Davison, who has been playing this sort of engaging ingenuite for most of his career. In particular, Babbarcombe bore a marked resemblance to Dr Stephen Daker, the idealistic young doctor that Davison portrayed in Andrew Davies's outstanding campus comedy, *A Very Peculiar Practice*. Like Daker, Babbarcombe was quickly seduced by a deliciously powerful woman (in this case Pippa Haywood) and like Daker, he worked for a university ever more tightly bound to the world of big business.

The faculty of theme park administration, however, was quite

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

enough of university jokes. Back to television. As Babbarcombe got down to the writing, we had old jokes about kiwi-fruit, timeless jokes about buzz words ("we want it realistic, artistic, visual and... luminous") and in-jokes about executive producers ("somebody who doesn't do very much but gets a separate screen credit on which the camera lingers"). Perhaps the best joke of all was

Babbarcombe's discovery that the *newlies* were being done before he delivered his script — to save time.

There were other bright moments, most of which involved West, who was on superb form as Melrose, the television cynic who ardently believed in quality, as long as it was cheap. Goodness, this was subtle stuff.

Bradbury wrote his novella based on his experience of working in television and Andrew Wallace apparently wrote *Burn Your Phone* (BBC2) based on his experience as a telephone operator. It must have been a very odd experience.

Many short plays — and particularly those that purport to be thrillers — suffer from an adolescent quality, forced upon them by the need first to generate dramatic tension and then to resolve it in under half an hour. So it rather proved with this, with the revelation that the menacing phone calls

that Andy (Alan Cumming, who also directed) had been receiving at the telephone exchange were not the first sign of mental illness but a psychometric test designed by his employer, being the dramatic equivalent of "and then I woke up". Was that it? It was.

Still, not much damage done. Before he got carried away with melodrama, Wallace had shown a good ear for... well, monologue in this case and Cumming, while hardly having to stretch himself in what was a one-man show, emerged as proficient behind the camera as he is in front.

As somebody who took an instant dislike to Kes at an early age, I was not looking forward to *Shadow* — the Peregrine (BBC2). But it could have been worse: I could have been a pigeon.

Feral pigeons, racing pigeons, even doves, I'm afraid I say, died a dozen leathery deaths as we

followed the "story" of *Shadow*, a female peregrine who lived in a quarry with a curiously nameless mate and reared a single chick, Storm. Storm could have been infertile and her mother clumsily kicked another out of the nest when she went off for lunch. Ash — anthropomorphism, don't you just hate it?

Simon King's photography, however, was as splendid as ever. Although one or two sequences looked as if they might have involved the co-operation of a trained peregrine, the nature-red-in-tooth-and-talon stuff was magnificent. Behind you, behind you, we shouted, but would those pigeons listen? "Shadow" had claimed her natural right," pronounced John King's narration as yet another band of feathers lapped their last. I expect the pigeons would like a right of reply on that one.

BBC1

7.00am JOE 90 (8467623) 7.25 Playdays (7808739) 7.45 Postman Pat (7082791) 8.00 Peter Pan and the Pirates (8665555) 8.20 Badger and Badger (8402352) 8.35 The Legend of Prince Valiant (8310265) 9.00 Incredible (8211791) 9.20 Sweet Valley High (8230391) 9.30 Record Breakers (8088907) 10.15 Stue Peter Magic (782636)

10.45 FILM: *Bigfoot and the Hendersons* (1987) with John Lithgow, Melinda Dillon and Don Ameche. A family's camping holiday is brought to an abrupt end when they encounter the legendary Bigfoot. Directed by William Byrd (T) (7237040)

12.30pm WIDEOPEN (48826)

1.00 NEWS (T) and weather (71689062)

1.08 REGIONAL NEWS (8677872)

1.10 NEIGHBOURS (T) (8086040)

1.30 THE WORLD OF PETER RABBIT AND FRIENDS (T) (48197)

2.00 FILM: *Porridge* (1979) Spin-off from the 1970s television series starring Ronnie Barker, Richard Beckinsale and Fulton Mackay. Directed by Dick Clement (T) (77420)

3.30 GLOBAL SUNRISE Cameras capture the rising of the sun from 20 different locations throughout the world, through six continents and every time zone (T) (8103333)

4.50 FINAL SCORE (1947710)

5.10 NEWS (T) and weather (7431277)

5.20 REGIONAL NEWS (8647130)

5.25 TOM AND JERRY (T) (8123517)

5.45 NEIGHBOURS (T) (8182420)

6.10 FILM: *The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982) starring Henry Thomas, Drew Barrymore, Dee Wallace and Peter Coyote. Spielberg's sci-fi fantasy which became one of the most successful films ever made, about a boy who befriends an extraterrestrial alien (T) (8630632)

8.00 RONNIE BARKER: A LIFE IN COMEDY Ronnie Barker gives his first interview since retiring from showbusiness, chronicling his early career in the prison sitcom *Porridge*, his performances alongside Ronnie Corbett to his comic portrayal of the penny-pinching *Admiral* in *Open All Hours*, *Picnic*, *Corbett*, David Jason, Nicholas Lyndhurst, Michael Palin and Richard Briers are among those paying tribute (T) (8123598)

8.40 NEWS (T) and weather (228771)

9.00 THE MILL ON THE FLOES Period drama based on the novel by George Eliot, charting the life of a woman forced to choose between the men in her life. Starring Emily Watson, James Fox, Bernard Hill and Peter Gunt (T) (81863802)

11.05 MATCH OF THE DAY Highlights of Manchester United's game against Aston Villa at Old Trafford (T) (878420)

12.10am FILM: *Big Jake* (1971) starring John Wayne as an ageing Texas rancher who rides to the rescue when his teenage son asks him to help to find his grandfather, who has been kidnapped, with Richard Boone, Chris Mitchum, Patrick Wayne and Maureen O'Hara, in her fifth and final movie with the Duke (T) (8134891)

1.55 WEATHER (281584)

BBC2

7.30 FILM: *Blockade* (1938, b/w) Henry Fonda as a farmer fighting for his rights during the Spanish Civil War. Also starring Madeleine Carroll, Leo Carrillo and John Halliday. Directed by William Dieterle (T) (8982504)

8.50 FONDAS ON FONDAs Henry Fonda hosts a tribute to his father, Jane Fonda (T) (8203333)

9.40 FILM: *My Darling Clementine* (1946, b/w) Classic John Ford western starring Henry Fonda as Wyatt Earp (T) (2253401)

11.15 NEW YEAR'S DAY CONCERT FROM VIENNA Riccardo Muti conducts the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra as they perform polkas, waltzes and marches by the Strauss family. Also included in the programme is an appearance by the Vienna State Opera Ballet. Simultaneous broadcast with Radio 3 (8087468)

12.30pm THE ROYAL INSTITUTION CHRISTMAS LECTURES In his final lecture Professor Conway Morris traces human evolution (T) (33964)

1.30 OLYMPIC GYMNASTICS Highlights from Atlanta (84523)

2.30 BALANCHINE New York City Ballet Salutes George Balanchine Celebrating the tenth anniversary of the choreographer's death with excerpts from *Who Cares*, *Apollo* and *Western Symphony* (4002913)

3.55 FILM: *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971) Based on Roald Dahl's classic children's story. Gene Wilder as the eccentric confectioner who takes a group of youngsters and their guardians on a tour of his phenomenal factory. Directed by Mel Stuart (T) (831716)

5.30 SKI SUNDAY SPECIAL (838336)

6.10pm THE EYE OF THE WIND David Attenborough pays tribute to Sir Peter Scott, founder of the WWF and the World Wildlife Fund (T) (826739)

7.00 WAITING FOR GOD Diana and Tom organize a nativity play (T) (2333)

7.30 UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE INTERNATIONAL Imperial College London vs the University of Michigan (T) (8)

8.00 THE TRAVEL SHOW CARIBBEAN SPECIAL Puerto Rico, Dominica and Antigua (46771)

8.40 SHOOTING STARS with guests Clive Mantle, Neil Morrissey, Anna Friel and Alvin Stardust (T) (107420)

9.20 THE TONY FERRINO PHENOMENON Musical fun with Steve Coogan and his Portuguese alter-ego, crooner Tony Ferrino (T) (869523)

10.10 FILM: *Short Cuts* (1993) with Andie MacDowell, Tim Robbins, Jack Lemmon and Jennifer Jason Leigh. Robert Altman's drama following a group of suburbanites whose lives become subtly entwined (T) (8818855)

1.15am WEATHER (5031227)

CHOICE

Global Sunrise Around the World in 80 Minutes BBC1, 3.30pm

Never underestimate the ingenuity of the people who make wildlife documentaries. Just when you thought that the genre could not possibly offer any new angles there comes a project of striking originality. As 1995 turned into 1996 camera crews from the BBC Natural History Unit were in position in 20 locations on six continents to film landscapes and wildlife as dawn approached. The beauty of the idea is that although we are seeing the results as another new series, the reality is an ongoing project. With Julian Patterson as anchor man, and experts on the spot, the cameras capture gannets in New Zealand, a giant turtle laying its eggs on a Queensland beach, geese flocking to East Anglia and other vignettes of the natural world and its rituals.

The Mill on the Floss BBC1, 9.00pm

It is strange how George Eliot's novels have become a feature of the television new year, for they hardly burst with good cheer and certainly not *The Mill on the Floss* with its bleak story of unrequited love. This is an observation, not a complaint. Eliot's naturalism is well suited to the screen and Hugh Steward's adaptation, helped by camerawork that is rich but never just pretty, adroitly captures the social and geographical milieu in which the story is set. Emily Watson, who achieved sudden fame last year with the cinema film *Breaking the Waves*, plays the pivotal role of Maggie Tulliver, the young woman torn between her love for two suitors while trying to maintain loyalty to her ill-starred family. Ian McEwan makes a promising debut as Maggie's brother, Tom, whose love-hate relationship with his sister burns through the narrative.

Klinik—Channel 4, 10.15pm

Have you heard that Diana, Princess of Wales, is going to a clinic in Holland for IVF treatment so that she can have another baby? No, this is not some tabloid expose but the central joke of a snappy little series based on the reviving of film footage. Previously employed on *Pallars*, a spoof about the Royal Family, the satirists are now applying to the Dutch royal couple. The plot has the clinic taking over by a Dr Werther, who looks and sounds not unlike Richard Wilson's Victor Meldrew. His plan is to kill off his Dutch patients and import more lucrative customers from the British National Health Service. It is a small but jolly effort, just about worth its ten-minute slot.

Cows Channel 4, 10.25pm

The Johnson family, Mum, Dad and three children, are played by such recognisable faces as Pam Ferris, James Fleet and Nicola Walker (seen recently in *Moll Flanders*). Or the faces would be recognisable if they were not covered with animal masks, for the Johnsons, though they live and talk like human beings, and mix with their social, do it as a bunch of cows. It is a sitcom, and even bolder for the writers, Nick Whitby and the comedian Eddie Izzard, to launch the Johnsons in a one-hour special prior to the series. Despite vulgarities which seem inseparable from television comedy these days, the joke is so subtly served with Patrick Barlow as a dotty bovine grandpa with a voice like Dame Edith Evans and a plot about the older son getting married to his human girlfriend. Peter Waymark

10.10 FILM: *Short Cuts* (1993) with Andie MacDowell, Tim Robbins, Jack Lemmon and Jennifer Jason Leigh. Robert Altman's drama following a group of suburbanites whose lives become subtly entwined (T) (8818855)

1.15am WEATHER (5031227)

HITV

6.00 GMTV (1184081)

9.25 SANTO BUGITO (8225994)

9.50 CARTOON TIME (2683633)

10.10 FILM: *A Man For All Seasons* (1956) Oscar-winning adaptation of Robert Bolt's play about the clash between Henry VIII and Thomas More over the King's divorce. With Paul Scofield and Robert Shaw (80731994)

12.30 NEWS (T) and weather (82336442)

12.45 THE MAKING OF JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH (T) (836046)

1.15 FILM: *Silverado* (1995) with Kevin Costner and Danny Glover. Western adventure about a mismatched quartet learning up to save a run-down town (49001710)

3.40 FILM: *Straight Talk* (1992) Romantic comedy, starring Dolly Parton. A naive country girl arrives in Chicago and is mistaken for a well-known radio agony aunt (850246)

5.20 NEWS (T) and weather (8234771)

5.35 FILM: *Feds* (1988) Two inmate recruits to the FBI training programme join forces to outwit a criminal mastermind. Starring Rebecca De Mornay and Mary Gross. Directed by Dan Goldberg (T) (1634791)

7.00 EMERMADE (T) (8159)

7.30 CORONATION STREET A whole host of surprises lay in store for Maxine and Maureen. Mike and Alma's preparations for their big dinner party look like being in vain (T) (81)

8.00 DES O'CONNOR TONIGHT With guests: Boris Strelak, Damage, Jimson and Ken Dodd (T) (8902)

9.00 FILM: *Die Hard* (1988) A New York cop (Bruce Willis) arrives in LA to attend his estranged wife's party, but he finds himself caught in a deadly game of cat-and-mouse against Alan Rickman and his gang of highly efficient terrorists. Also starring Bonnie Bedelia. Directed by John McTiernan (T) (8633155)

11.25 NEWS (T) and weather (185178)

11.40 FILM: *Lifeboat* (1958) Sci-fi drama focusing on the survivors of a spaceship disaster trapped in a drifting escape pod with a saboteur among their number. Directed by and starring Ron Swickard with Robert Loggia, Jessica Tuck and Stan Shaw (90975)

1.20am FILM: *Bite the Bullet* (1975) starring Gene Hackman, James Caan and Candice Bergen. Western set at the turn-of-the-century about a motley crew of riders who enter an endurance horse race. Directed by Richard Brooks (3327758)

3.45 NOT FARE AWAY (8466866)

4.40 FILM: *A Tale of Two Cities* Animation (804624)

5.55 NEWS (7415050)

CENTRAL

As HTV West except:

12.45pm CELEBRITY SQUARES (836046)

1.20am FILM: *ARE YOU BEING SERVED?* (1961)

3.05 FILM: *TILL DEATH US DO PART* (1968) 3.55:11

4.50 FOOTBALL EXTRA (1155628)

5.30 THE MAKING OF STAR TREK: BEYOND FIRST CONTACT (8596383)

WESTCOUNTRY

As HTV West except:

12.45pm-1.15 EMERMADE (836046)

ANGLIA

As HTV West except:

12.45-1.15 CROSSWITS (836046)

S4C

Starts: 6.20am SESAME STREET (8202505)

7.20 THE BABYSITTERS CLUB (8461449)

7.50 STUNT DAWGS (864449)

8.15 LITTLE SHOP (8646420)

8.35 WHERE ON EARTH IS CARMEN SAN DIEGO? (8903975)

9.00 THE BIG BREAKFAST (89081)

10.00 Film: *Tom Thumb* (1743197)

11.45 THE ADVENTURES OF MOLE (164371)

12.45pm SLOT MEITHRIN (736028)

1.15 RACING FROM CHELTENHAM (4909064)

3.45 THE BEAST BITES BACK (2559772)

4.30 FAMOUS FRED (84)

5.00 PUMP (7265)

5.30 COUNTDOWN (46)

6.00 NEWYDDION (479772)

6.05 HENO (873449)

6.35 SION A SIAN (771642)

7.00 POBOL Y CWM (876420)

7.25 MOM: YR EIDEL (241517)

8.00 STEWART WHYTE MCEWAN JONES (790949) 8.45 NEWYDDION (243159)

9.00 PAVAROTTI RETURNS TO LLANGOLLEN The tenor entertains (22551)

10.30 BROOKSIDE (495739)

11.05 KLINK! (196284)

11.20 COWS (809517)

12.15am CAROLINE IN THE CITY (38383)

12.45 HOMICIDE: LIFE ON THE STREET (271208)

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RTE 1

Starts: 7.00 EURO NEWS (474784) 8.00 TEXTILES (743488) 8.15 FILM: *MONSIEUR VERDUN* (1634343) 10.15 NEW YEAR'S DAY CONCERT FROM VIENNA (2684253)

12.30pm WILDOVISION (9747497) 12.35 GARDENERS' DIARY (4602648) 1.00 THE ICE PRINCESS (8256913) 1.50 FILM: *THE SOUND OF MUSIC* (7825917) 4.55 THE FLYING BOATS AT FOYNE (1151888) 6.00 THE ANGELUS (106403) 6.01 SIX ONE AND WEATHER (6177361) 6.15 CARTOON TIME (8401975) 6.20 CONSUMING PASSIONS (842468) 6.30 FILM: *THE THREE MUSKETEERS* (8227130) 7.57 LOTTO DRAW (4545636) 8.00 FILM:



TAKEOVERS 35

Leaping to the defence of Simon de Zoete

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 1 1997

SHARES 36

Simon Bentley leads the top 1996 performers



BUSINESS EDITOR LINDSAY COOK

Bankers forecast housing market to strengthen further

By JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE housing market is set for a general and sustainable strengthening this year, according to the British Bankers' Association, which yesterday unveiled its latest mortgage lending figures.

The major British banking groups made gross loans of £2.672 billion in November, virtually the same as October's total of £2.667 billion. Seasonally adjusted figures for net lending showed a rise in mortgage lending of £610 million in

November, a touch down on the £623 million increase in October.

New approvals were down 6 per cent from October's level, with a total value of £2.358 billion approved in November against £2.503 billion previously. However, the BBA noted that these figures still compared favourably with last year's 10 per cent fall in the value of approvals between October and November.

Tim Sweeney, Director-General of the BBA, said: "The steady recovery seen over recent months in the major banks' mortgage business continued in November, and the indications for

future growth are promising." He noted that approvals had held up well in November after October's strong figures and that, together with the fact that building society mortgage lending figures are higher than a year ago, the evidence is of a general and sustainable strengthening in the market.

The BBA's figures suggest that the quarter-point rise in base lending rates at the end of October has not dented activity in the housing market. Although most building societies did not move their rates until December, once they had seen

the contents of the Budget, some psychological impact might have been expected from the first base rate rise for 21 months.

Lenders are now looking towards the next monetary meeting between Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, and Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, on January 15. Although Mr Clarke has said he sees no dangerous inflationary pressures emerging, Mr George believes rates will have to rise sooner or later.

Most forecasters expect another quarter-point rise in rates early in

the new year. Some argue that, faced with pressure from the Bank, Mr Clarke may opt to move in January, as far away from the election as possible. Others suggest that the Chancellor may want to wait until February's monetary meeting, when he will have seen the fourth-quarter growth figures, published on January 27.

The BBA's positive assessment of prospects for the housing sector echoes the optimism expressed by a clutch of leading lenders. The Halifax building society, Britain's biggest mortgage lender, said yes-

terday that the housing market recovery was now well established and forecast a "sustainable and healthy recovery" in 1997. It is expecting house prices to rise by between 6 per cent and 8 per cent this year. The Halifax said that there was a danger of a 1980s style boom and bust, but emphasised that this was still unlikely.

The Nationwide and Abbey National both believe that house prices will rise by an average of 7 per cent this year, while Barclays Mortgages said that homeowners are becoming more optimistic about the market.

Freeze lifts oil price and worries insurers

By MARIANNE CURPHY
AND CARL MORTIMER

THE cold snap in Europe pushed oil prices higher yesterday, and prompted warnings from insurers that the freeze over Britain may soon lead to increases in household and motor premiums.

In the oil market, the price of the February Brent Crude contract rose to \$23.80 per barrel in London, and heating oil closed at \$22.80 per tonne, up a further 75 cents after Monday's \$6 surge in price. However, gas prices in Britain remain subdued.

Very cold weather at Christmas 1995 cost Britain's insurance companies £400 million, with Scotland and northern England the worst-affected areas. The Association of British Insurers (ABI) yesterday warned that if record low temperatures affect the whole of the country this year, claims could run into billions of pounds.

Insurers have laid on hundreds of extra staff to cope with an expected influx of calls from homeowners suffering from damage caused by burst pipes when the thaw eventually begins.

Although the ABI has spent more than £135,000 this winter trying to inform householders how to avoid damage, its members are bracing themselves for a rise in claims over the next few weeks.

Last year, most of the damage occurred during the holiday period, when temperatures were at their lowest and many business premises were empty, unheated and unchecked for a fortnight. Insurers paid out more than £100 million for cold-weather damage to commercial premises.

A spokesman for Royal & Sun Alliance said: "If insurers experience another winter of large claims, they will have to reconsider their current rates."

Bacton prices for gas reported by PH Energy Analysis range between 14p-16p per therm, well below the 21p per therm seen in a sudden spike in price in November.

Transco, which runs the gas flexibility market, said that demand was subdued, probably due to the long closure of businesses over Christmas and the new year holiday.

Astec's chairman sells £2.4m of shares

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

BRIAN CHRISTOPHER, the non-executive chairman of Astec (BSR), the electronics components group that he helped to found 25 years ago, has sold £2.4 million worth of shares in the company, it was revealed yesterday.

A spokesman for the company said that Mr Christopher, who is 63 and has two children, sold 1.6 million shares on Monday out of the family trust. The sale was for personal reasons, the spokesman added.

Mr Christopher sold the shares at 154p each and has retained 3.1 million shares in the company, equal to a 0.5 per cent stake.

Mr Christopher founded Astec in Hong Kong in 1971 with Neal Stewart. In the late Seventies Astec was backed into BSR, the struggling Birmingham-based company formerly known as Birmingham Sound Reproducers. The group has been based in Hong Kong since 1983 but its shares are still listed in London. Mr Christopher became the chief executive of the group in 1982 and chairman in 1988.

Shares in Astec (BSR) fell 1p to 157p yesterday. The rest of Mr Christopher's stake is therefore worth nearly £5 million.

Engineers see 400,000 job losses

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BRITAIN'S engineering industry is likely to lose up to 400,000 jobs through technological and product change, industry leaders are to announce.

The industry's forecast of jobs to shed over the next decade is in addition to any jobs which may be lost for economic reasons over the business cycle.

Leaders of the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF) will announce the forecast job losses later this month, when they reveal the results of a long-term strategic review of the future of the engineering industry in Britain.

Based on an extensive survey of engineering company chief executives, training and development professionals, academics and other opinion formers, the EEF's forecast will steer clear of business changes, including job losses or gains, resulting from the economic cycle. It will instead focus on the shape of the engineering industry until the year 2010.

In overall terms, the review will suggest that the prospects for engineering in Britain look reasonably optimistic. The review will also suggest that Britain is likely to focus increasingly on the higher-value computer-based control and

systems products rather than traditional metal-bashing.

The strategic review will suggest that technological and product market change will have a significant impact on the engineering workforce in the UK. EEF leaders will forecast a decline in the workforce in Britain from its current level of about 1.6 million people to between 1.2 and 1.4 million — a cut of up to 400,000 jobs by the year 2010.

Most of the job cuts will be driven by the changing and higher skill mix the industry is expected to require. The industry's review will say that the profile of the remaining engineering workforce will change "significantly", with a sharp reduction in the number of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs.

Instead, there will be a much higher proportion of professional engineers, technologists and technicians as the technological and skill requirement of the industry increases.

Although the industry will recognise that such changes will have considerable implications for its current workforce, the EEF's study will forecast that 50 per cent of the people who will join the industry in the future will have had some form of higher education.

The review will also conclude that the industry's workforce will be increasingly flexible, with a higher proportion

of women employed at all levels, especially in graduate and technical positions.

EEF leaders, who are arguing that the industry will increasingly move from current "lean" production techniques to what the review will describe as "agile" manufacturing — a flexible and reconfigurable approach to business which will involve smaller manufacturing units coming together on an ad hoc basis — are suggesting that the changes they are forecasting will carry further implications for employee relations in engineering.

National collective bargaining was ended in Britain's engineering industry in 1989, and the EEF will suggest that the changes it envisages in its strategic review will present a "real challenge" to trade unions organising in the traditionally highly unionised sector.

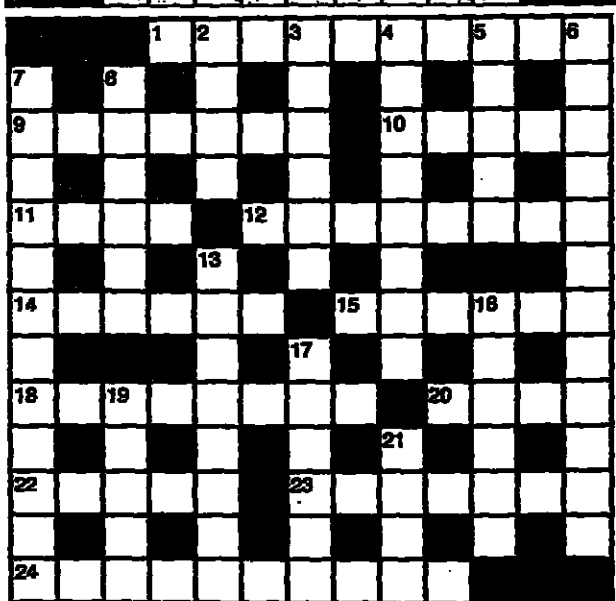
The highly skilled and highly paid people the industry will need, together with more flexible manufacturing systems, are likely to reduce the need for union representation and highly structured trade union agreements, the EEF argues.

One EEF leader says: "I see these changes as totally changing the traditional trade union-employer relationships, and a further decline of union membership in the manufacturing sector."



Victoria Younghusband, a lawyer with Stephenson Harwood, becomes the first woman to join the City University Club. Three London clubs are men only. Ms Younghusband, who first visited the club as her father's guest in October, said: "I abhor the sandwiches at the desk routine."

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 979

ACROSS

- 1 Double-edged (complement) southpaw (boxer) (4)
- 9 Mercury alloy (7)
- 10 Brainsick, violent hero (8/9s film) (5)
- 11 Destiny (4)
- 12 In which Danube, Dnieper drain (5,3)
- 13 Reduce in effectiveness (6)
- 14 Walk gently (6)
- 15 To flatter (6,2)
- 18 Brick-firing oven (4)
- 22 Doomed, romantic hero (Shak) (5)
- 23 Systematic study of phenomena (7)
- 24 Artistic dabbler (10)

DOWN

- 2 Advantage: rim (4)
- 3 Fall: dry (clothes) in machine (6)
- 4 Wicked action (8)
- 5 Jetsons' miserable down in them (5)
- 6 Make embarrassing error (4,1,7)
- 7 Tudor style (house) (4-8)
- 8 Portable computer (6)
- 13 Annihilated (5,3)
- 16 The East (6)
- 17 Its behaviour "a riddle" — a mystery — an enigma (Churchill) (6)
- 19 S India, Sri Lanka people, language (5)
- 21 Thin fog (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 978

- ACROSS: 1 Home help 5 Eel 9 Good Samaritan 10 Shoe 11 New Year 13 Infant 15 Sensor 18 Tsunami 20 Bach 23 Reprehensible 24 Also 25 Holy Week
- DOWN: 1 Huge 2 Mouch 3 Has-been 4 Le Mans 6 Taters 7 Honorary 8 Crow 12 Victoria 14 Faux pas 16 Embassy 17 Clever 19 Apex 21 Cable 22 Deck

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 974

- ACROSS: 1 Ill-treat 5 Seek 8 Betel 9 Athlete 11 Box 12 Octennial 13 Devote 15 Dulcet 18 Pendulous 19 Cox 20 Legible 21 Teller 22 Need 23 Tentacle
- DOWN: 1 Imbued 2 Latex 3 Rule of thumb 4 Awaits 6 Elegiac 7 Knell 10 Honours list 14 Vinegar 16 Tax-free 17 Popeye 18 Pylon 19 Collie

Due to the Christmas post, the winners of the Times Two Crossword 974 will be published next Wednesday. All rights subject to availability.

Shares close year with a record

By MICHAEL CLARK AND JANET BUSH

SHARE prices in London saw out the shortened trading session on the last day of the year on a high note. But it was not the fast and furious end to the year that many investors had hoped for.

After hitting a new intra day high of 4,123.2, the FT-SE 100 index of leading shares ended just 2.8 up at a new closing high of 4,185. That is a rise on the year for the index of 11.7 per cent.

But the year-on-year performance of the FT-SE falls far short of the 20.3 per cent rise it achieved in 1995.

Inevitably, with the stock market closing at 12.30pm turnover was affected. It slumped to its lowest level of the year with just 203 million shares changing hands.

The pound appropriately ended a year of spectacular

gains on a rising note, gaining not only against a weakening mark but also against a resurgent dollar.

Sterling's effective index against a basket of currencies ended at 96.1 yesterday, a substantial rise even on Monday's close of 95.6. At the end of 1996, it stood 15.6 per cent higher than at the end of 1995. The pound's gains have been most spectacular against a sagging yen, rising 24 per cent. Sterling rose 16.9 per cent against the French franc and 18.7 per cent against the mark. It appreciated 10.3 per cent against the dollar, which itself was doing well in comparison with other world currencies.

Because of problems at our supplier, a small proportion of the unit trust prices on page 34 has not been updated from Monday.

Businessman sues the SFO for libel

By JON ASHWORTH

AN Isle of Man businessman is suing the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) for defamation, in a case linked to the prosecution of Charles Deacon, the Staffordshire solicitor jailed last January over an international "advance fee" fraud.

Thomas Taylor, of Sanit in the Isle of Man, is suing the SFO and a Staffordshire policeman acting for it over an interview conducted in March 1995.

Mr Taylor alleges slander in remarks made during the interview, which was conducted at the offices of Burton Copeland, the solicitor. He further alleges that a transcript of the interview is libellous. Mr Taylor is suing for unspecified damages.

Details are outlined in a writ issued at the High Court in London. Mr Taylor could

not be contacted yesterday, and his lawyer was unable to comment.

The SFO said it had received the writ, and would be contesting the allegations.

The case is thought to be linked to ongoing investigations surrounding the Deacon case.

Deacon and his accomplice, James Fuller, were jailed for a total of 16 years at Middlesbrough Crown Court in January, after they were convicted of swindling companies and individuals out of a total of £11.25 million.

Victims included Belling, the former cooker manufacturer, which paid £2.5 million from pension fund assets against a \$50 million loan which never materialised. Belling went into liquidation soon afterwards.

GWR stays tuned to takeover

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM



Henry Meakin expects to enhance earnings

GWR, the acquisitive regional radio group which on Monday completed the purchase of Classic FM, kept up the pace yesterday by buying Radio Wyvern for £3.9 million.

Henry Meakin, chairman of GWR, said: "The acquisition will increase the enlarged group's attractiveness and potential to advertisers and sponsors." He said the deal should be earnings enhancing in the year ending March 31, 1998.

The cash bid values each Radio Wyvern share at £7.55, and offers a notional interest payment of 24p. There is a share alternative of 4.01 new GWR shares for each Radio Wyvern share. GWR said 57 per cent of Radio Wyvern shareholders, in-

cluding the station's directors, have already committed themselves to accepting the offer.

GWR already operates 32 local licences in the UK and has 3.9 million listeners in the South, Midlands and East of England. As part of the disposal programme after the Classic FM acquisition, GWR has agreed to sell some of its shares in Leicester Sound and LNR, and some AM licences.

Radio Wyvern, which serves Hereford and Worcester, has one FM and one AM licence. GWR may dispose of the Wyvern Radio FM licence, or of its Severn Sound FM licence, if regulators decide it is too dominant in the area.



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